



CLOSE COMBAT MAGE

BOOK 03

Cloud Sky

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Close Combat Mage

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by

Cloud Sky

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Synopsis

As a mage, it's very embarrassing to be in the water-type.

Although it's a battle profession, the attack is very weak.

Most people use it as a support profession.

But, the appearance of Suo Jia (索加) changed that convention.

A water-type mage can also be incomparably strong!

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Chapter 201: Dawn Of Dawn (Part 1)

While pondering, Suo Jia turned around and left the inspection stage. Suo Jia didn't have any intention to rely on this kind of soldiers; they wouldn't be able to contribute much to the cause. Suo Jia could only place his hopes on the 10,000 regular soldiers now.

Suo Jia rushed towards the military drill ground. The drilling ground was the small public square between two army camps. Once the alarm bell had been sounded, all the soldiers would immediately assemble in the small public square between the two barracks. If they went forwards, they'd be able to support the city walls, and if they went backwards, they'd be able to guard the fort's border station. This gave them the freedom to advance or retreat.

On the way there, Suo Jia knitted his brows tightly; since the slave soldiers were already like this, the regular soldiers wouldn't be much better. That damn fatty had definitely stuffed all the army funds and provisions into his own pockets. What more could one expect from the army raised by such a guy?

Very soon, after sweeping past countless buildings, Suo Jia arrived at the small public square. After a quick glance, Suo Jia couldn't help but stand there blankly. This...just what kind of joke was this?

Their weapons were dazzling, their armors were bright, their flags were fluttering in the wind; an army adorned with steel was standing at attention in the public square. A light breeze brushed

by without producing any sound. Even though there were only 10,000 people, they emitted an earth-shattering aura that made them seem impossible to oppose.

Even though there was still a huge distance between them, Suo Jia was certain that this was a genuine armed force, the real iron-blooded knights. Their aura alone was something that couldn't be faked.

In a flash, Suo Jia suddenly landed on the inspection stage and swept a glance around. It was a 10,000 man army with two types: there were 5000 pike users that occupied the middle and left camp, as well as 5000 cavalry that made up the right camp. Their weapons all gleamed brilliantly under the sunlight. What shocked Suo Jia the most was that the 5000 war mounts were all stably standing there. They didn't move at all, nor did they make a single sound. It was a miraculous sight!

Seeing Suo Jia's shocked expression, Naifa Lian proudly said, "This is our Dawn City's trump card troops: Dawn Army! It is because of this army that our Dawn City can be as steady as Mt. Tai!"

Suo Jia looked at Naifa Lian in astonishment and asked in confusion, "I don't understand. Your father has such a stingy personality, how could he have trained such a powerful army? How was he willing to spend so much money to equip these super warriors!"

Naifa Lian blushed in shame and said in a low voice, "This is something inevitable. Although Father loves money, he would've

been killed ages ago without the protection of these soldiers. Moreover....these soldiers are the tools he uses to rake in wealth!”

“Oh!” Suo Jia nodded in understanding. These soldiers were that fatty’s weapons. If they covered their faces, they could pass themselves as thieves outside the city and steal from traveling merchants. At the same time...the army’s existence could suppress any possible trouble the slave soldiers could stir up. It could be said that this army was the root of the Naifa Family’s establishment.

After pondering for a bit, Suo Jia turned around doubtfully and asked Naifa Lian, “Since they’re so strong, why didn’t your father arrange for them to ambush us? If he had dispatched these guys, even we would’ve had to retreat in defeat.”

Naifa Lian shot Suo Jia a helpless look and explained, “Firstly, Father underestimated you guys. In his opinion, you were a group of 30-40 children. He believed that the same number of high-ranking generals and over a hundred archers combined would definitely be enough to eradicate you all easily.”

“Mm...” Suo Jia nodded. He couldn’t deny the fact that if he hadn’t personally spent massive amounts of money to equip up the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, they really wouldn’t have been a match for those guys.

Naifa Lian bitterly said, “On the other hand, these soldiers wouldn’t vow loyalty and devotion to my father anyways. Strictly speaking, my father lacks that charm that draws people to willingly sacrifice themselves for. My father has always been using the Emperor’s name to command these soldiers around. They are

only loyal to the Emperor's orders. That's why...even if Father asked them to come, revealing your identity would be enough to make them change sides right before battle."

"Ai..." Suo Jia sighed and shook his head. He finally realized what the root of the problem was. Although the fatty had spent a large amount of money on this army, he hadn't won over their hearts. It could also be said that nobody was willing to swear loyalty and devotion to him. Thus, it wasn't that the fatty didn't want to use them, but that he couldn't. After all...these soldiers were only loyal to the Empire, not the fatty himself.

Suo Jia looked at the imposing army of steel in front of him with admiration. He knew that because they were the fatty's protectors, as well as his tools to obtain wealth, the fatty had to equip them to their teeth for the sake of keeping his own life. He no longer cared about how much money he had to spend. After all...as great as wealth was, it wasn't as important as one's life!

Since he had used the power of such formidable equipment, the fatty naturally wasn't willing to let it go to waste. He surely dispatched the army every day to go steal. It was precisely due to this reason that he had enemies everywhere. One must realize that such a special, powerful army couldn't be found just anywhere. Although they concealed their faces, everyone could clearly recognize their identities.

It could be said that the fatty had no friends. Aside from himself, everyone was a target to steal from, as well as his enemy. Once he lost his power, everyone would hunt him down to kill him. The number of people that he had offended was really too great.

Naifa Lian proudly said, “These 5000 pike users protect the city. They are seasoned soldiers that have experienced and successfully lived through hundreds of wars. In terms of defense, they are godly soldiers. There is no one in this world that could ever break through the city walls that they protect!”

“Hm...” Suo Jia nodded in praise and looked at the 4-5 meter long pikes in the soldiers’ hands. He had to admit that aside from people like the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes that were freaks impervious to sword and spear, even experts would have difficulty escaping from injury against these soldiers!

Naifa Lian continued with a tone of admiration, “As for the 5000 Mengma Knights, they are the roots of Dawn City. Over the past 30-40 years, each of these 5000 soldiers have personally experienced thousands of battles. On average, they’d battle once a week, and they once battled for 3.5 years straight in a public zone!”

Naifa Lian smiled and loftily declared, “If the pike users are people that have experienced hundreds of battles, then these Mengma Knights that have survived thousands of battles are definitely elites. They’re all proficient in battle qi, battle skills, and equestrian archery. Even if War Gods went against them, they’d still suffer from losses!”

Suo Jia looked over at the cavalry. From what he could see, these cavalrymen were entirely covered with steel; even their faces were hidden. The surfaces of the steel armor were filled with blade scratches. Judging by how deep they were, it was clear these scratches were not inflicted by themselves, but from violent enemy

slashes.

From a single glance, he could tell that the exteriors of the steel armors were completely covered in dents. In addition, these countless dents were created by traces that blades had left behind. The war blades they held were particularly chipped. Even the sheathes were scarred. From this, one could tell just how bitter the battles they had experienced were.

However, wasn't what caught Suo Jia's attention; rather, it was the Mengmas these guys rode on that were renown for both their attack and defense powers. These things were quite amazing. One Mengma was already worth a massive amount of 40 million. How were these things that the fatty could afford? Just the 5000 Mengmas alone were worth 200 billion!

Seeing Suo Jia's shocked expression, Naifa Lian laughed and said, "There's no need to be so surprised. These Mengmas were allocated by the Empire. In addition, they regularly participate in tournaments between the Empire's corps. No matter how greedy Father is, he wouldn't dare go against this decision. Otherwise, he'd definitely be exposed!"

Naifa Lian paused for a bit before continuing, "Also, the armors and weapons these soldiers have are all allocated by the Empire as well. They're all numbered specifically, and nobody can use them without approval. If they are damaged, they will immediately be replaced with new versions with no cost involved."

"Hehe..." Suo Jia couldn't help but chuckle excitedly. Before coming here, Suo Jia had already requested for the garrison troops

from the Emperor. To the Emperor, this was just one 10,000 man army. If Suo Jia wanted it, then why not grant it to him? If the Emperor didn't give enough military power to Suo Jia, Dawn City would probably lose its defenses.

Seeing the flourishing state of the army, Suo Jia couldn't suppress the wide smile on his face. This hard-blooded army would count as Suo Jia's people from now on. In addition...he'd have these powerful Mengmas and the ability to change armors at any time. An army as formidable as this could only be found here.

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(TL Note: The word Mengma here is written as 蒙玛, which sounds the same as mammoth, 猛犸. It's probably a play on words, and the Mengmas are supposed to be mammoth based, but not actual mammoths, as they don't exist in that world, and they can't evolve into velociraptors (dinosaurs). The punny name is just a result of the author being uncreative.)

Chapter 202: Dawn Of Dawn (Part 2)

Seeing Suo Jia's excited manner, Naifa Lian couldn't help but smile as well. For some unknown reason, she suddenly no longer feared Suo Jia. Now, he was just a child in her eyes. She couldn't understand why she had been so afraid of him before!

Naifa Lian continued, "You'd better not underestimate these 5000 Mengma Knights. In reality, this is a portion of the million man army that the Empire dispatched during the last conflict at the border; they have all undergone extremely special training!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia looked at Naifa Lian in doubt and asked curiously, "A million man army! Are you saying...that the Empire actually has a million people as formidable as this! Heavens....where are they all now?"

Naifa Lian bitterly laughed and said grimly, "How could there be a million such people! In reality, it was exactly these 10,000 soldiers that were the elites among the entire army. As for the remaining 990,000, they all died at Dawn Fort!"

Suo Jia couldn't help but gasp at Naifa Lian's words. To think that hundreds of thousands had died was really too terrifying. Suo Jia looked at the soldiers in front of him. He knew that they had not only killed many enemies with their own hands, they had also personally witnessed millions of their companions of war fall under their enemies' blades, one after another!

The reason these soldiers were deemed elites were not because

anyone rated them, but because they had successfully survived so many battles. They were all elites that weren't lacking in talent, ability, luck, or strength!

Naifa Lian continued, "The 5000 pike users are best suited for protecting the city, while the 5000 Mengma Knights are best suited for attacking cities. They are omnipotent existences when it comes to charging and breaking through enemy lines!"

Naifa Lian continued, "Putting those 5000 pike users aside, as they are relatively new soldiers that have only fought for a few dozen years, those Mengma Knights are old soldiers that I hope you treat well. They have really lived hard lives." As she said this, tears began to glitter in Naifa Lian's eyes.

Suo Jia looked at Naifa Lian in bewilderment and asked, "Of course I'll treat them well. Why are you crying?"

Brushing away her tears, Naifa Lian tried hard to suppress her emotions as she choked, "They have all been trained to be soldiers since they were young. For the Empire, they devoted their youth, their lives. They really sacrificed too much."

Naifa Lian looked at the soldiers with admiration and murmured, "Young Master, can you guess how old these soldiers are?"

Suspiciously inspecting the orderly steel army in front of him, Suo Jia asked curiously, "How old can they be? Are they 30 years old?"

Naifa Lian suddenly replied, “Double that and add 1!”

“Double that and add one?” Suo Jia mumbled to himself. He then abruptly whipped his head around and said to Naifa Lian in shock, “God, you can’t be telling me that they’re already 61!”

Naifa Lian nodded and said in a heavy voice, “That is their average age. The oldest among them is 64, and the youngest is 60. Actually, these Mengma Knights are all the mightiest ones. In a few days, it will be their 50th year anniversary to commemorate their service to the Empire!”

“Holy crap!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but turn back around to look at the Mengma Knights. There were both massive respect and great pity in his gaze. What he respected was their devotion and selflessness. For the Empire’s safety, they had contributed their everything. What he felt pity for was their large ages; could they still fight?

Seeing the expression in Suo Jia’s eyes, Naifa Lian could clearly guess what he was thinking. She smiled and said, “Young Master Suo Jia, you are making a grave mistake if you’re underestimating them. As I’ve stated earlier, they are all proficient in battle qi, battle skills, and equestrian archery. Although they are already over 60 years old, this is their prime time. A warrior can typically live up to 120-130 years old! They can use their lives for the sake of the Empire for at least another 40 years!”

“Pa!” Suo Jia abruptly hit himself in the head. He knew that typically speaking, a warrior’s life span was 20-30 years longer than a normal person’s. In addition, they grew more powerful as

they aged. Even after 100 years, their strength would just continue to grow with no signs of decreasing.

Actually, warriors were simply people that were better at making use of their capabilities. As their age accumulated, their capabilities would increase in number. Their control over these capabilities would also grow stronger. So warriors actually grew more formidable with age. This applied even to the day they died; right before their deaths, they'd be able to use their strongest attack!

Naifa Lian said, "Also, these 5000 Mengmas were the ones that had been allocated back when they were part of the million man army. Now each one of them has one. Currently, these Mengmas have reached around the age of 50. Does Young Master know what a 50 year-old Mengma implies?"

Suo Jia wordlessly looked at Naifa Lian. He had really lost his ability to reply. The Mengma was an earth-type magical beast that had the external appearance of a horse, but had four legs the thickness of a human's. Its body was as sturdy as a bull's, and it had two horns sprouting from its head. A Mengma's movements were as swift as the wind.

As an earth-type magical beast, as long as its feet were on the ground, the Mengma had a running speed that a horse couldn't possibly compare to. Although it couldn't instantly cover 100 li, it could easily cover 10 li in a flash!

However, although the Mengma's speed was extremely fast, it wasn't the fastest beast. The Mengma was famous for its powerful

defense and charging ability. In terms of speed alone, it was only in the middle ranks; it still couldn't compare to that of a leopard, a lion, or a tiger type magical beast.

However, after reaching the age of 50, the Mengma would evolve. During this period, it would transform into a Velociraptor. Its front limbs would form sharp claws, its body would become upright, its back limbs would become incomparably thick and solid. It became a creature that had the fastest movements on ground!

Moreover, the Velociraptor was classified as a high grade, lower tier magical beast. It could activate Earth Sting, Rock Thorn, Rock Shield, and Stone Skin. Its close combat physical attacks were incomparably powerful. The Velociraptor's only weaknesses were its magical defense, as well as its physical defensive abilities, which were a bit lacking. It was most afraid of mage group attacks.

Normally, the Mengmas was perceived as most suitable for armies. After all, their defense and charging assault power were appropriate for group battles, as they were hard to injure. On the other hand, the Velociraptors were another type of magical beast that sacrificed physical and magical defenses for speed and magic. Their attacks were formidable, and they had many methods of attacking as well. Their speeds were at the extreme limits, to the point where they would be able to fly up into the air if they had wings stuck onto them.

Actually, these Mengmas already had the ability to evolve. But this whole while, nobody had allowed them to do so. They were all most familiar with the Mengmas, and didn't actually wish for

them to evolve into Velociraptors. Regardless of how mighty Velociraptors were, the Mengmas were clearly most appropriate for them.

Suo Jia stared at the 5000 Mengma Knights in deep concentration. After thinking over it for a while, he abruptly waved his hand, gesturing for the pike users to disperse. Only the 5000 Mengma Knights remained in their places, ready to receive orders.

Suo Jia thought long and hard. He understood the characteristics of the Mengmas; they had thick skin and muscle, and had gigantic bodies. Their physical defensive powers were high, and due to the heaviness of their bodies, the amount of force in their physical charges was even greater! Their speeds were also quite fast; it could be said that they were the best suited magical beasts to become mounts in a battle.

Despite this, the Velociraptors were clearly even more formidable. Although their defensive abilities decreased, their speeds increased. Although their charging force decreased, their attack power increased. In addition, they had more methods of attack.

Earth Sting was a sharp thorn of earth with a length of at least 2 meters that pierced forth from the ground. It attacked enemies from below.

Rock Thorn was a sharp thorn of rock around 1 meter long. Like an arrow, it shot out at its enemies. It was equivalent to the Ice Arrow Technique in ice type magic.

Rock Shield was a large defensive guard made of rock to block any incoming attacks. It had very strong defensive abilities.

Stone Skin was an earth-type auxiliary magic that created an energy layer made of the earth elements. This increased the user's physical and magical defenses!

With these four great magics, the army's overall might was boosted by a great amount. The only downside was that a decrease in defenses meant that they could get injured more easily, which wasn't at all appropriate for group combat on the battlefield!

Chapter 203: Velociraptor Knights (Part 1)

After thinking for a bit, Suo Jia finally made his decision. He abruptly raised his head and declared, “Everyone, hear my command. Immediately return to the army camp, and evolve the Mengmas!”

Having received Suo Jia’s orders, nobody showed the slightest hesitation. All the Mengma Knights simultaneously raised their blades to indicate that they had received the order, and then turned around and neatly walked towards the left camp.

After watching the Mengma Knights gradually disappear off into the distance, Naifa Lian turned to look at Suo Jia in astonishment. “Do you really know what you’re doing? If you want to evolve the Mengmas, you need a great amount of earth-type magic crystals. That’s because...the evolution of Mengmas into Velociraptors requires a massive amount of earth energy.”

Suo Jia nodded and firmly replied, “I know that. I understand that I need to pay a high price. Don’t worry, I’m commanding people to go procure earth-type magic crystals right now. At the same time, I’ll get them to escort your family to a secure location.”

Naifa Lian furrowed her brows and said, “”But, do you really believe that it is most appropriate to spend so much money to evolve them? Even if you don’t mind the loss of money, a Velociraptor’s survival capabilities cannot be compared to a Mengma’s!”

Suo Jia smiled and nodded. “I understand what you’re saying as well. Actually...for the sake of pursuing speed, Velociraptors give up their thick muscle and fat, substantially lowering their physical and magical defenses. However, that isn’t any of concern; I’ve already considered that. As long as a layer of armor is prepared for them, that weakness can be completely covered!”

“What!” Hearing Suo Jia’s words, Naifa Lian’s eyes opened wide with shock. Stupefied, she said, “What are you saying? You’re going to get a set of armor for the Velociraptors? How is that possible! No such armor exists in this world! Moreover, how much money would you need to spend?”

“Hehe...” With a cold chuckle, Suo Jia said in a low voice, “If one doesn’t exist, it can be designed. All armors are originally designed by people. As for money, I’m willing to spend any amount as long as I can quickly boost their strength and power!”

Suo Jia knit his brows together and did some calculations. If he really followed his previous words, his money actually wouldn’t be enough. After contemplating it for a while, Suo Jia finally came up with a solution. He had to immediately rush back now and create a batch of potions, then sell them at auctions for money!

When he returned to the city lord’s mansion, Suo Jia directly found Duo Mei, and ordered her to bring out the Magic Automatons from her interspatial ring. He then told her to lead the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes to escort Naifa Lian’s family out of Dawn City. As they returned, they would also have to procure a great amount of earth-type magic crystals! They had to be extremely fast...

After receiving this command, Duo Mei immediately spurred into action. Suo Jia secluded himself and began to create potions, splitting them up to sell at various auctions. Suo Jia believed that these kinds of potions that could replenish magic power and battle qi at any moment would surely be sold for a great amount.

A week later, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes rushed back with a large amount of earth-type magic crystals. As for Naifa Lian's family, they had already been transferred to an S-rank mercenary group for their escorts. Although the escort fee was extremely high, they'd definitely be safe. Suo Jia was no longer concerned with money, time was more important!

After receiving the large amount of earth-type crystals, the 5000 Mengma Knights all began to evolve their Mengmas. At the same time, Suo Jia finished producing all his potions, and began to organize the slave soldiers.

Although the slave soldiers were greater in number, their combat force was very small. They had the role of being cannon fodder. In reality, these slave soldiers were all those that had offended officials of the Empire. They had come here to receive their punishment; only after dying would they be free. This Dawn Fort was their prison.

Such a large amount of people consumed a great amount of army rations every day. In Suo Jia's opinion, they were like termites. But he couldn't release them either; even if he was a viscount, he didn't have the power to pardon crimes.

Suo Jia had debated over this difficult problem for many days. However, he still hadn't come up with a solution. Helpless, Suo Jia could only take his time to mull it over for longer. However, there was one point he was sure of: there was no reason for them to just eat every day without doing anything. They weren't elderly people, and nobody could possibly take care of them.

But judging from the records, these slave soldiers had never eaten to their heart's content before. Because of the fatty's greed, he had simply made sure they didn't starve to death. That's why all the slave soldiers had pasty faces. One couldn't completely blame the fatty for this; he had the same plan as Suo Jia. At the very least, they couldn't just eat for free!

If it were just 1-2 of them, or even 100-200 of them, Suo Jia wouldn't bother with them. But there were 100,000 people! How much did they eat in total per day? This number was absolutely shocking.

Suo Jia gathered all the slave soldiers together once more, then gave a string of orders. Firstly, Suo Jia wouldn't be like the fatty, who didn't let them eat as much as they wanted. However... wanting to just spend every day eating while idling wouldn't be allowed either. They had to exchange food with labor! If they didn't do any work, they wouldn't get a single bite of food.

As he had time on his hands, Suo Jia split the 100,000 people into two groups. They didn't have anything to do? Go renovate the city walls. The taller and thicker they were, the better. It was at least better than just lying around here every day. It would not only reinforce the city walls, but train their bodies as well, killing two

birds with one stone.

A small group of slave soldiers obeyed Suo Jia's command and headed straight outside of the city walls and began to excavate rocks. They then gathered the collected materials, then shipped these to the city walls to stack them up one by one. However, there were still 60,000 slave soldiers that turned a deaf ear to his orders. As slave soldiers, they never knew when they would die. For all they knew, a battle could explode tomorrow, and they'd die there. Thus, they weren't willing to bother with labor. No matter what, they'd end up dying; was there any difference between dying early and dying late?

Originally, they believed that Suo Jia was simply going around implementing vigorous new policies, and using them to add to his own power. They had all already mentally prepared themselves to get killed. But strangely enough, Suo Jia didn't seem to even notice their rebellious attitudes, and completely ignored them,

This ignoring meant completely not paying any mind to them in any way. Suo Jia didn't punish them or reward them. Most importantly, he didn't even provide food for them any longer. Only those that worked had the right to eat. In addition, they got to eat whole grain, snow-white buns until they were content! There was no limit!

That night, the slave soldiers that hadn't worked smelled the delicious aroma on their companions' bodies, and struggled hard to resist their hunger, constantly swallowing their saliva. People that hadn't ever experienced going hungry would never understand this pain.

The next morning, the slave soldiers that hadn't eaten much in the first place and had starved for an entire day could no longer endure it any longer. They set out to the working grounds and began to excavate the rock to transport it to the city walls. After working for an entire afternoon, it was finally time to eat. When they saw the snow-white buns and the side dishes, the slave soldiers all began to cry.

It was true that they didn't care about life or death. However, they couldn't ignore torture. Since they didn't have the courage to kill themselves, they had to struggle to live. In addition, they discovered that the labor actually wasn't that difficult. It was actually the opposite; the labor allowed them to grow. They no longer needed to hide away in their rooms and silently suffer from feelings of solitude and isolation again.

Chapter 204: Velociraptor Knights (Part 2)

The days passed one after another. More and more slave soldiers were unable to resist their hunger, and each one of them walked to the working grounds. The pile of rocks underneath the walls had gradually grown taller. Eventually, they all joined the labor force. As long as they could eat until they were full, nothing else was important.

Dawn City was shaped like a fan. It was located between two mountain ranges shaped like ‘人’. There were paths to outside the country that went through the base of the mountains. The city walls were 100 meters wide, completely blocking off the ravine. This also closed off the path leading from the common zone between the six countries to Holy Light City.

On the other side of the semi-arc of the fan shape, the city walls were extremely long, stretching out 10 li. This was set to be a large-scale construction project that couldn't possibly be completed within a short amount of time. However...this was exactly what Suo Jia desired. At the very least, these slave soldiers finally had something to do. They couldn't just eat for free the whole time. Moreover...as a result of their labor, Dawn City was becoming increasingly more sturdy!

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes weren't idle this whole time. They had been dispatched by Suo Jia once more to transport all the items in the Atomic Alchemy Labs. This included the remaining Magic Automatons, as well as the alchemy equipment underground. These were treasures worth thousands of gold that one couldn't just purchase.

Everyone was busy in their own way. Suo Jia wasn't lazing around either; he was continuously producing the four colored potions. At the very least, those 5000 Mengma Knights each needed to be equipped with such potions. Each bottle of potion could save multiple lives at critical moments!

Suo Jia placed the small alchemy furnace in front of him, then pulled out the Great Frost Wyrms core. When he reached in to get it, he was confused; what was this? It was slippery, cold, and soft...

Puzzled, Suo Jia pulled out the Great Frost Wyrms core, which was the crystal core he had gotten that time the Empress had committed suicide. When he looked at it, he saw a fleshy, large creature currently hugging the icy core greedily, refusing to let go.

When he looked more closely, he saw that it had blue skin, and was about the size of a small dog. Its blue wings covered with exquisite scales were currently flapping furiously as it seemed to try to steal the icy core back from Suo Jia.

Suo Jia soon realized that this creature was his magical beast: the little pet! He hadn't seen it in a while; did this little pet eat fertilizer or something? How had it grown so large?

At the moment, the little pet was already the size of a person's head, and this was just its body. If it extended its wings, it would already be quite large. From the characteristics of his outer appearance, he seemed to have already left its newborn body, and was now entering the elementary stage of its adolescent form!

“Chirp chirp...” After a long period of being unable to steal the core back, the little Frost Wurm cried out anxiously. It looked at Suo Jia pleadingly with a hopeful expression. It was clear to see that it really liked and needed that icy core.

Suo Jia realized that although this icy core was just an ice-type magic core to humans, it was a hormone, a type of fertilizer, that allowed this little pet to quickly mature!

If this thing was so good, why didn't others try to use such methods? Actually, this wasn't a question at all. According to historical records, nobody had yet been able to kill a Great Frost Wurm. Even the Black Dragon King couldn't do it. That's why the Great Frost Wurm's magic core only existed in legends. Even if one searched the entire world, they probably wouldn't be able to find any other aside from this one.

Suo Jia examined the magic core more closely, and he could clearly tell that it had already shrunk by quite a bit. What he could ascertain was that if this magic core was made into a staff, it would definitely be a Peak grade ice elemental staff. But if it was eaten by this little guy, a staff would no longer be an option. However, the little pet's strength would exponentially increase!

The little pet's adolescent stage was split into three levels. There was the 30 years elementary stage, the 60 years middle stage, and the 90 years advanced stage. After reaching 100 years of age, it would finally begin to mature! Its might could be compared to that of the highest level magical beasts!

Judging from its current appearance, the little pet had already reached the 30 years elementary state. Otherwise, it wouldn't have grown so large. There were three phases, and each phase was indicated by the size of its body. Every time it reached a new phase, its body size would increase by tenfold! It would only stop growing after reaching the age of 1000.

Seeing the little Frost Wyrms' pleading expression, Suo Jia couldn't help but frown. Such an expensive treasure was the world's highest Peak grade magic core. If the little pet just ate it, it would be too much of a waste. Boosting ice elemental magics by 200% didn't have much meaning. Most importantly, this staff wouldn't disappear from using it too much; it was an eternal existence.

However, absorbing this magic core would quickly boost the little Frost Wyrms' strength. According to some rough calculations, it could decrease the little pet's 100 year training. After absorbing the entire magic core, it would most likely surpass the adolescence period and enter the longest period. Its strength would have reached that of High ranked magical beasts in this realm.

"Pa!" Abruptly clapping his hands together, Suo Jia finally made his decision. There was no need to think further. A staff could be looked for later, but this was the only thing that could let the little Frost Wyrms break through this level. Was there any need to consider it further? Having one more High ranked magical beast helping him would definitely be more powerful and advantageous than having a staff.

Suo Jia rubbed the little Frost Wyrms' head and warmly said,

“Ok, ok...you can stop holding it, I just want to use it for a bit. After I finish, I’ll return it to you. No matter what, this icy core is yours!”

As a Peak grade magical beast, the little Frost Wyrms intelligence had already reached a 7-year-old’s state of mind. It could completely understand what Suo Jia said, but Suo Jia couldn’t understand its words.

Hearing Suo Jia’s words, the little Frost Wyrms was shocked speechless. It then abruptly stretched out with its short and sharp claws, suddenly hugging Suo Jia’s arm. Its small head intimately rubbed against Suo Jia’s arm with a happy expression on its face.

Suo Jia patted the little Frost Wyrms head and smiled, “Alright, go play over there. I need to start working. Once I finish, I’ll return the icy core to you.”

The little Frost Wyrms obediently sat in a corner. It tilted its head and curiously watched Suo Jia working. Although this wasn’t the first time that it had seen Suo Jia make potions, it had never understood what he was doing.

Under the little Frost Wyrms gaze, Suo Jia concentrated hard on making potions. In the beginning, Suo Jia hadn’t really felt anything. But as time passed, Suo Jia finally discovered a problem.

Before, a magic spell could create 10 bottles of Magic Potions. But now, it could only produce 5. What exactly was going on? Could it be...that his spirit power and magic power levels had decreased?

Shocked, Suo Jia pulled out his Violet Crystal Ball and closely inspected it. He was confused to discover that his own magic power and spirit power had not only not decreased, but had actually increased by a great amount. After all...a day was 24 hours, a year was 365 days, and he was able to maintain the Meditation state this whole time. How could his improvement speed be anything but fast? Especially since Suo Jia's magic power and spirit power were actually increasing by a significant amount the whole time.

After quite a while had passed, Suo Jia's gaze shifted back to the little Frost Wurm. It was the exact same as before, the only difference being that its original size was the size of one's palm. Back then, it had hugged the icy core the whole time, vehemently refusing to let it go. However, it had abruptly grown larger, which was why it's forced to squat off to a side this time. Thus...the output was lacking in comparison.

Suo Jia abruptly realized that the crucial point was the little Frost Wurm. As a Peak grade water elemental magical beast, the little Frost Wurm's body was surrounded by the world's most active water elements. That's why activating magic around it would have boosted effects.

Suo Jia's eyes lit up. Now....the little Frost Wurm had already entered the elementary phase of its adolescent state. That meant the water elements around it would be even more excited. It also meant that..its boosting effects would definitely be even better!

As he thought this, Suo Jia picked up the little Frost Wurm by its

neck. Ignoring its flailing teeth and claws as it struggled back, he directly placed it on the alchemy furnace, and activated Magic Spring once more.

“Pata, pata, pata, pata...” Following Suo Jia’s magic, a hollow sound rang out. Rows and rows of Magic Potions quickly fell out without break. With a single Magic Spring, Suo Jia had created 50 bottles of Magic Potions!

This no longer needed calculations. The previous little Frost Wyrms had doubled the potions output, but now, it had increased the output by tenfold. Originally, the process could only produce 5 bottles, but with the little Frost Wyrms, there were 50 bottles created. This was definitely not just a misperception.

Feeling the surrounding moisture from the Magic Spring, the little Frost Wyrms contently closed their eyes, seemingly enjoying the feeling. Seeing this, Suo Jia was obviously unwilling to stop. Such a large output was really amazing. 100 spells could produce 5000 bottles, and activating these 100 spells only took 10 minutes.

However, this cyclone-like production speed was also accompanied by the major consumption of the four elemental magic cores. After producing only 200,000 bottles of four colored potions, the accumulated magic cores had already been completely used up. But at the moment, there were 5000 potions of various colors, so the production was already complete.

Every batch of potions was created by the combination of four different potions. There were 10 bottles of each type of potion, but they weren’t typically used. These potions were only used during

critical moments. It could be said that this batch of potions could sustain soldiers to continue fighting continuously for an entire 24 hours. The implication of this was huge; it wasn't something that a typical person could imagine.

Chapter 205: Choosing Generals (Part 1)

Originally, since the potions had already been manufactured, they should've directly been distributed. However...Suo Jia suddenly realized that although he had 10,000 regular army members and 100,000 slave soldiers under his command, he didn't actually have any way of leading them. That was because...all the high ranked military officers had been killed by him and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes!

Suo Jia couldn't help but break out into a cold sweat. Luckily, no enemies had attacked. Otherwise, under such circumstances, how was he supposed to organize everyone to meet the enemy head-on? How would Suo Jia's commands be transmitted out?

Suo Jia hurriedly rang the alarm bell, gathering all of the soldiers together. Then...after preparing what he wanted to say, he quickly rushed to the public square. Just as before, the slave soldiers and regular army soldiers were all gathered there, listening to Suo Jia's words.

Suo Jia looked at the sea of people and said in a heavy voice, "Everyone, I'm sure you all know that because the Naifa Family head rebelled, the high ranked military officials in the army were all killed. Now, you all no longer have generals, or any leaders. This is something that absolutely won't do."

Suo Jia continued, "Right now, I want everyone to elect leaders. These people must lead everyone to advance through life, work, marching the army, and fighting. As for the standards to be elected, those are up to you all to consider. It doesn't matter what

perspective you are judging them from.”

Hearing Suo Jia’s words, everyone began to discuss amongst themselves. Typically speaking, the commanding officers in the army were assigned by the higher-ups. This type of exclusive selection method had never been used before; it was definitely an original and creative method. Allowing everyone to select their commanding officers built their faith in their leaders.

Suo Jia bitterly smiled at the sight of the heated discussions below him. In reality, this was his solution to an issue he couldn’t solve. He didn’t understand the army that well, nor did he understand the prestige and popularity of people within the army. The candidates rashly appointed would not necessarily win over everyone’s hearts.

Of course, Suo Jia had also considered making the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes assume the position as commanding officers. However, in terms of ages, they weren’t much older than 20 years old. Supervising 60 year old soldiers was clearly not very appropriate. In addition, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes didn’t have that time to waste.

Moreover, even if everyone accepted the lead of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, they couldn’t possibly win over everyone’s confidence. Just being strong wasn’t good enough; one had to have things like prestige and reputation. These were the most important aspects. To these soldiers, what kind of credentials did these Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes have to speak of?

A slave soldier near the platform said, “Sir, may I ask if we slave

soldiers must also elect commanding officers?”

“Hm?” Suo Jia looked at the slave soldier in confusion and asked, “Do you mean to say that you guys have never had any commanding officers before?”

With a firm nod, the slave soldier bitterly smiled and said, “Of course not. We are driven out to the front lines in every battle; there’s absolutely no need for a commanding officer. All we have to do is charge forwards.”

“Ah...” Suo Jia pretty much understood what the slave soldier was saying. These slave soldiers were only viewed by others as cannon fodder to block the shower of arrows, and then attack the enemy’s formation. This was their only use.

Suo Jia firmly declared, “Of course you must choose. From today onwards, you guys will be like the regular army soldiers, and become authorized parts of the army. The commanding officers in charge of supervising the army not only have to be elected, but completely decided on!”

Naifa Lian lightly nudged Suo Jia from the side and said, “Young Master, that won’t do. If you let them become an official part of the army and unify them under one leader, a rebellion would lead to a major disaster. That is precisely why the soldiers aren’t allowed to choose their commanding officers.”

“That...” Suo Jia couldn’t help but frown at Naifa Lian’s words. He knew that he had thought of the matter as simpler than it was.

He wasn't the only cunning one in this world. Anything he came up with could be thought of by others. However, because of various reasons, others might not be able to actually carry out the same methods.

Suo Jia really wanted to take back his words. But since he had already said them, he couldn't possibly retract them, especially since there were so many people witnessing it. He'd accept any amount of suffering now; otherwise, he wouldn't call himself Suo Jia!

Suo Jia gritted his teeth and declared, "I don't care if you revolt or not. If anyone rebels, it will definitely be because of something I did wrong. If I do well, even slave soldiers would support me."

Suo Jia turned around to face the regular army camp and said, "As for you guys, you should hurry up and choose your commanding officers as well. I won't interfere with how you select them but...I warn you all that these election rights are sacred, and must not be sullied. If anyone dares to commit fraud in this regard, the martial law will not take mercy, no matter who the perpetrator is!"

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, a Mengma Knight walked out from the formation and up to the platform. He first saluted respectfully to Suo Jia, then said, "Viscount Suo Jia, I believe... that there's absolutely no need to continue this electing process!"

"Eh!" Suo Jia's expression changed as he nervously thought to himself. Could it be...that these guys who were unwilling to follow his arrangements because of his young age?

The soldier continued, “Viscount Suo Jia, we’ve always had the best person for the job in mind. I believe....that everyone, not just me, feels the same!”

At this point, the soldier turned around and shouted, “Brothers, say it together: who is our ideal general?”

“General Harvey! General Harvey! General Harvey...” All the soldiers began to cry out. Seeing their excited and revering expressions, Suo Jia could tell that this Harvey’s prestige and reputation were at absolutely frightening levels. Nobody could possibly overwhelm him.

Suo Jia smiled and nodded, “Ok. Although I don’t know this General Harvey, I believe that someone so loved and respected must be a well-revered general. I have received everyone’s opinions!”

Suo Jia declared, “I wonder who this General Harvey is? I would like to invite him up so that my humble self can see his face!”

A steel armored knight walked out from the formation with large strides. Although he was only walking, the heroic spirit that radiated from his body was enough to draw anyone’s attention. This person was definitely not simple.

“Creak...” General Harvey walked up to Suo Jia and stretched out his right hand. He lifted his visor to reveal a dignified and solemn face. After flawlessly saluting, General Harvey said in a deep voice,

“Soldier Harvey greets Viscount Suo Jia!”

“No, no, no...” Suo Jia smiled and shook his head at the greeting, “Didn’t you hear the shouts of the soldiers just now? You’re no longer a soldier anymore, but the general of the entire Mengma corps!”

Suo Jia paused and frowned for quite a while. He then firmly declared, “I will go and apply for a knights group soon. So aside from your status as a general, you will also be that knights group’s second in command!”

Suo Jia fell into deep thought, murmuring, “You guys are the pride of Dawn. Dawn is a hope, and hopes should be represented with green. That’s why...you will all become the Emerald Angels Knights group!”

“Emerald Angels Knights group?” General Harvey asked in confusion. He then nodded in praise as he said, “Indeed, choosing green is the right choice. Green not only represents hope, but also the earth element. We, the Mengma corps, are an earth-elemental unit! There’s no color more appropriate than this.”

“Hehe...” Suo Jia couldn’t help but smile at Harvey’s words. The Blood Angels mercenary group, the Dark Angels thief group, the Golden Angels merchant group, and the Emerald Angels Knights group were all established already. If he also established two other groups, the Azure Angels and the Radiant Angels, he’d have six major Angels groups. He alone could control all six; moreover, they were all peak-grade groups. When Suo Jia thought this, he couldn’t help but feel excited.

However, Suo Jia suddenly realized, he seemed to have already established the Emerald Angels adventure group. Wouldn't he be repeating? Suo Jia bitterly smiled at Harvey, who currently had an expression of approval on his face. Suo Jia realized that now, he could only change the adventure group's name to the Azure Angels! This Emerald Angels name would be given to the knights to use.

Thus, the Emerald (Green) Angels, the Azure (Blue) Angels, the Blood (Red) Angels, the Golden (Yellow) Angels, and the Dark (Black) Angels groups were all successfully established. Only the Radiant Angels group remained before Suo Jia's expected goal was reached.

Chapter 206: Choosing Generals (Part 2)

Suo Jia solemnly said to the serious-faced Harvey, “Alright. Now go bring your subordinates back to the army camp. Choose the backbone of the group, and construct levels of authority. Take note, you must send me a list of names before 8pm. Tomorrow morning at 8, I will formally convene a nomination assembly!”

“Pa!” Harvey looked at Suo Jia, his entire body trembling slightly in excitement. After quickly saluting, he wordlessly turned around and led his group back. Soon afterwards...the 5000 Mengma Knights quickly left the public square under his lead.

Suo Jia shifted his attention back at the 5000 pike users. After organizing his thoughts, he announced, “Alright. It’s your turn now. Tell me, who is the ideal general in your minds?”

The people fell silent for a moment, before they finally shouted in unison, “General Jason! General Jason! General Jason! General Jason!”

Suo Jia smiled and nodded, waving his hand to indicate for Jason to come out. A sturdy, and not too tall body walked out from the formation.

The visor was lifted, revealing a middle-aged soldier around 40 years old. Although he was much younger than the Mengma Knight, he was clearly a veteran as well.

“Are you General Jason?” Suo Jia asked with a smile.

General Jason fearlessly nodded and firmly replied, “That’s right, Viscount Suo Jia. This one is Jason Wei.”

Suo Jia solemnly replied, “My request for you is identical to what I told General Harvey. Before tonight, you must organize a list of names across various levels of authority. Tomorrow morning at 8, I’ll formally convene a nomination assembly!”

Just as General Harvey had done, General Jason began to tremble in excitement as well. After working hard for so long, he’d finally obtained a chance to stand out. This was a chance that was beyond important to a soldier.

Soldiers that didn’t want to be soldiers were bad soldiers. Every one of them desired to become generals, but historically, such positions were assigned by the higher-ups. No matter how great one’s performance once, it wouldn’t make much of a difference. Even if they performed brilliant military service, they’d always have it falsely claimed by higher-ups. Thus, the day they’d be able to stand out had gradually grown more and more distant for an indefinite amount of time.

But now, Suo Jia had announced on the platform that he’d adopt the election method and allow all the soldiers to choose their generals. That way, everyone finally had a chance to stand out. This was extremely important to all the soldiers.

After he finished explaining all the matters pertaining to the two groups, Suo Jia looked at the surrounding slave soldiers. Seeing his

inquisitive gaze, they didn't bother to wait until he asked, and immediately shouted over each other:

“Red-footed Roger...Red-footed Roger...Red-footed Roger...Red-footed Roger...” The originally scattered shouts gradually became closer and closer to each other. The previously dull scene had become quite stormy. In the end, the 100,000 people were all shouting together; it was really a world-shaking sight.

Suo Jia was bewildered when he saw the excited and frenzied, yet revering expressions on the slave soldiers' faces. Exactly what kind of person was Roger? Why was he so popular? Someone that 100,000 slave soldiers loved and respected was definitely a complex person!

The slave soldiers here were all criminals that had broken Holy Light's laws. They had been sent here to atone for their sins, and would be fated to stay slave soldiers for the rest of their lives.

These 100,000 slave soldiers were criminals that had gathered together here these past hundred years. Although many amongst them had died...those that were able to survive through countless battles as cannon fodder were clearly outstanding talents!

Firstly, being a criminal was complicated in itself. Now...these people had also survived so many battles, and were clearly extraordinary. With their armor and equipment, as well as their roles as cannon fodder, those that could return after a hundred battles were extremely rare figures. They were more precious than even the Mengma Knights.

Moreover, what Suo Jia found really hard to believe was that there was a figure that could make 100,000 criminals so excited and earn their respect. Exactly what type of person was he? Convincing regular soldiers' hearts was easy, but winning the hearts of these unyielding slave soldiers that lived from hand to mouth was really bizarre.

“Pata...pata...pata...” A slim, tall, and beyond handsome youth walked out from the crowd of slave soldiers with the support of a grotesquely disfigured slave soldier.

As a slave soldier, he didn't have any set uniform, and wore whatever he wanted. Even if he wanted to go into battles with bare arms, nobody would ever object. This could be seen from the guys behind this youth and how they wore all types of things, of all shapes and colors, and everything anyone could possibly imagine.

But the youth walking in the very front was different. His attire was very exquisite. Although he no longer had the emblem of a noble, the distinguished aura around him had even more grandeur than a noble's. A single glance was enough for Suo Jia to discern that he was surely a descendant of some aristocrat. Otherwise, there's no way he'd have that kind of air!

Suo Jia watched as the youth stopped in front of the platform. His legs were apart, his hands stuffed in his pockets. He smiled insincerely and said to Suo Jia, “Yo! Are you the newly arrived Viscount Suo Jia? You don't seem very old...”

He was blunt, very blunt. Suo Jia stared hard at the arrogant youth in front of him. He knew that the youth facing him definitely didn't have the proper attitude a general should have.

If it were anyone else, they would've definitely gotten angry over this guy's conceitedness. Even if he hadn't been immediately punished, he'd probably have been chased out. Nobody would ever accept such a guy to be their subordinate. This wasn't a person that could be commanded.

However, Suo Jia was different; this young man was indeed different from others. Although his expression was lazy, his attitude was haughty, and it could even be said that he was rude, his eyes seemed to reflect all his inner thoughts.

What kind of eyes were those? Although he had a soul, his eyes were so empty and full of despair, that Suo Jia couldn't help but appreciate those eyes that had lost all light. Was he probing Suo Jia?

Suo Jia smiled. He slowly strode over and walked off the platform. Seeing this, Red-footed Roger couldn't help but show an expression of a surprise. However, he still stood there as lazily as before. There was a relaxed smile on his face as he continued to stand there without moving.

Everyone watched as Suo Jia slowly walked up to Roger. About a meter away, he stopped in his tracks, and his eyes locked onto Roger with a courageous and fearless expression.

For a moment, the entire public square fell silent. Everyone secretly worried that Roger would act rudely to Viscount Suo Jia. Suo Jia had absolute power and could immediately execute Roger. The crowd couldn't help but hold their breaths as they watched the confrontation between the two, quietly observing the situation panning out.

Just like that, the 100,000 slave soldiers watched with bated breath as neither Suo Jia or Roger averted their gazes. They each tried to search for the answers they wanted within the opposite party's eyes.

After some amount of time, finally...a faint smile gradually formed on Suo Jia's cold face. He stuck his hand out and slowly reached over at Roger. At the same time, Suo Jia said in a low voice, "Allow me to re-introduce myself. I am Dawn City's new lord, Viscount Suo Jia. I'm very pleased to meet you, Roger!"

A shock seemed to run through Roger's body after hearing Suo Jia's greeting. He pulled out his hands from his pockets and gently clasped Suo Jia's hand with a smile, "I'm Roger, and am very happy to meet you, honorable Viscount Suo Jia."

Suo Jia's smile became brighter. Indeed...just as Suo Jia had expected, this guy was definitely a descendent from an aristocratic family. When Suo Jia confronted him with the noble's etiquette, regardless of what the guy thought, as a noble he had no choice but to grimly respond. Even if the opposite party was one's archnemesis, one would still need to have an appropriate appearance. This was what an aristocrat was!

Suo Jia laughed and suddenly extended his arms, hooking them around Roger's neck. He then forcefully dragged Roger back towards the platform while saying something to Roger in a low voice.

Chapter 207: The Three Great Generals

(Part 1)

All the slave soldiers were dumbstruck as they watched Suo Jia and Roger walk up to the platform with their arms slung over each other's backs. What exactly was going on? Could it be that those two were old acquaintances? Why were they so close?

Putting aside what the slave soldiers were thinking, Suo Jia was currently tightly gripping Roger's neck and he said in a low voice, "Damn, aren't you making me lose too much face? What are you doing....how am I supposed to go offstage in front of so many people?"

Hearing Suo Jia rebuking him, Roger made an odd expression. He looked at Suo Jia and inwardly thought, "What is this? Do we know each other? If I recall correctly, this is the first time we've met."

Suo Jia continued, "Oh please, we're both aristocrats, so we have to support each other's reputations. You can't just go and tear down my stage. Let's agree now that if we have any words to each other, we can say them in private. You have to leave me some face in front of so many people, OK?"

"Aristocrat?" Roger started and stared in Suo Jia in shock as he said in a wavering voice "Viscount Suo Jia must be joking. How could Roger be some kind of aristocrat? I'm merely a minor slave soldier that isn't even worth mentioning."

“No, no, no...” Suo Jia shook his head at Roger’s self-mockery, “Although you don’t have the emblem of an aristocrat, that doesn’t change your identity. The aristocrat’s emblem isn’t their only symbol. Actually, there are many people out there that wear the aristocrat’s emblem who I wouldn’t recognize as true aristocrats. On the other hand, there are people that don’t wear the emblem, but are aristocrats all the same!”

Roger couldn’t help but look at Suo Jia with an expression of gratitude. In reality, he had always considered himself as an aristocrat. Even after falling to a slave soldier, his mindset had never changed.

However, while he could go around saying this, he understood better than anyone else that he was no longer a true aristocrat. The current him had already been branded as a slave, and would never become an aristocrat again.

Actually, he didn’t seek much, just respect. He had already lost all of his pride. Now, only the slightest bit of dignity remained as mental support. If he lost even this pretense of respect, he would rather die.

After arriving at the platform, Suo Jia finally disentangled his arms and surveyed Roger. Suo Jia then said enviously, “Damn, standing together with you doesn’t seem very wise. A guy like you really looks too attractive!”

“Hahaha...” Roger couldn’t help but sincerely laugh. With a shake of his head, he cordially replied, “You’re praising me too much. Actually, Viscount Suo Jia isn’t inferior to me, your age is

just a bit young. Once you're older, I'm sure that you'll be even more amazing than me."

Suo Jia smiled. That's right...who was Suo Jia? If he could help others beautify their appearances, how would his own be any lacking? Before giving the others the treatment, he had to have first tested it on his own body.

Suo Jia was certain that in the future, he'd definitely be the best-looking man in the world. He'd fix any places that were ugly. If anyone else wanted to get the treatment, they had to at least give up an Epic ranked equipment, but all Suo Jia had to do was raise a hand.

Suo Jia surveyed Roger. Even now, he couldn't understand why Roger was so loved and respected by everyone, nor did he understand why everyone called him Red-footed Roger!

Suo Jia suspiciously looked at the black leather shoes that Roger wearing. He then knit his brows together and said, "Hey! I heard everyone call you Red-footed Roger just now, so why are you wearing black leather shoes? This seems to be inconsistent with your name!"

Roger couldn't help but darkly chuckle as he said coldly, "Although my shoes right now are indeed not red, you will understand why I'm called Red-footed Roger once you see me fight."

Suo Jia looked at Roger in curiosity, and soon realized

something. As Suo Jia was guessing to himself, Roger continued, “Please don’t suspect my name just because of my shoes. Actually, the reason I’m called Red-footed Roger is just because enemies’ blood always dyed my shoes red, and not because I wear red shoes. Heavens...I’m a man you know!”

Suo Jia fell silent for a bit before bursting out with laughter. He strongly clapped his hand on Roger’s shoulder and praised, “You little...you’re not only handsome, but cool as well. I like it!”

Hearing Suo Jia’s praise, Roger couldn’t help but look down at the hand on his shoulder with a forced smile. Why was this Suo Jia acting so familiar with him from the start? He was trying to get intimate with him so quickly. However, Roger had to admit that he really liked Suo Jia’s attitude towards treating people and handling affairs. Roger felt quite pleased when he interacted with Suo Jia; it gave him a very comfortable feeling. Actually, it had even let him completely forget his status as a slave soldier!

“Roger! Let’s talk secretly for a bit. Come over and help me. As long as you sincerely assist me, I’ll help you get rid of your status as a slave soldier and restore your aristocrat’s emblem. If you perform enough outstanding military service, I can guarantee you that I will make you a Holy Light aristocrat once more!” Suo Jia whispered in Roger’s ear.

“What!” Roger couldn’t help but be shocked at Suo Jia’s words. He asked Suo Jia incredulously, “How is that possible? A slave is a slave. I’ve never heard of a slave being able to politically rehabilitate back into society. Once a person is branded as a slave, that is what they are for the rest of their life!”

The corners of Suo Jia's mouth lifted as he chuckled, "Hmph, you shouldn't doubt me. If I said that I can do it, then I will absolutely carry it out. Even if I wanted to trick you, I wouldn't try to use such a matter to do so!"

Suo Jia laughed and firmly declared, "Tonight, I'll help you get rid of your slave brand. Then, as long as you make some outstanding military achievements, I can confer you a native noble rank. I will then request for the Emperor to restore your status as an aristocrat. Don't worry, I'm very close to the old man Emperor. He wouldn't have any reason to refuse a matter as minor as this!"

Roger narrowed his eyes and said seriously, "Are you really speaking the truth?"

"Pa pa!" Suo Jia strongly patted his own chest and confidently said, "I've already told you, I will definitely do anything that I say I will. There's no need to doubt my words."

Roger sharply inhaled in excitement. After hesitating for a moment, he replied, "Since Viscount Suo Jia is so generous, then I won't hold back. I'll just say this directly..."

Roger seemed to throw all caution into the wind as he pressed on, "If, you can help me save my family, then I, Roger, will sell my life to you. How about it?"

"Your family?" Suo Jia muttered in confusion.

“Yes...” Roger nodded strongly and solemnly said, “That’s right. Excluding the young ones, my family had their statuses as aristocrats stripped because of people trying to frame me. My family members were thus all reduced to slaves that were sold freely at the slave market.”

Suo Jia frowned at Roger’s words. Although he made it sound simple, Suo Jia knew that there had to be a really complicated story behind this matter. There was no way it was something minor. If he messed up while dealing with it, he’d be wrapped into vortex of power struggles that would be hard to escape.

Seeing Suo Jia’s grave expression, Roger couldn’t help but tightly bite his bottom lip. He also knew that this request was too difficult. Putting aside the fact that his family members had already been sold to various locations that included even foreign countries, the spiral of conflicts between powers within the country was already something no ordinary person would be willing to get involved with.

After some consideration, Suo Jia said, “Can you tell me how many people are in your family total? Where are all of them located, and how do I rescue them?”

“That...” After stuttering for a bit, Roger replied, “There are over 100 people in my family. However, only 30 or so remain. As for where they are, I don’t know either. Some are in Holy Light Empire, and some are in other countries!”

“Mmm...” After pondering for a long time, Suo Jia firmly replied, “Alright. Regardless of whether or not I can complete this request it, I’ll agree to carry it through to as far as I possibly can! In addition, I’ll immediately initiate a search and rescue process. Soon...you’ll be able to meet your family again!”

“Ok!” Roger took a deep breath and resolutely declared, “As long as Viscount Suo Jia is really willing to help me, I, Roger, will receive your intentions, regardless of how many family members you manage to save. No matter what command you give me, I’ll do it, even if it’s to commit an offense and conspire against higher powers!”

Chapter 208: The Three Great Generals

(Part 2)

That night, Suo Jia welcomed three guests into his office. These people were General Harvey, General Jason, and General Roger. Currently...each of them was holding a form in their hands, waiting to submit it to Suo Jia.

The first to walk up and speak was General Harvey. As he passed the form over to Suo Jia, General Harvey said carefully, “I split the Mengma Knights group into 5 major bodies. There are 1000 Knights in the middle sections, two branches in the left section that totals 2000 Knights, and two branches in the right section, which also has 2000 Knights. The grand sum is 5000 Knights!”

Harvey looked at the form in Suo Jia’s hands and continued, “The 5 main lieutenants on the form each command a single branch of the Knights group. When in battle, they’ll lead their groups to advance in movement, defense, and attack according to my commands!”

“Mm...not bad!” Suo Jia read the form as he listened to General Harvey’s explanation. He praised, “This way is extremely good. One level supervises another. Such perfect command is extremely appropriate!”

General Harvey’s expression lit up at Suo Jia’s praise, and he continued, “There are 10 sergeants under each lieutenant. Each seargent also controls 10 corporals, and each corporal commands 10 Knights!”

“Good!” Suo Jia shouted in praise after hearing Harvey’s arrangements. This was something that no army had ever done. Before, the smallest division reached 1000 in number. The corporal thus commanded 1000 people. But now, with General Harvey’s divisions, the corporal commanded 10!

Suo Jia sighed in praise, “God, how did you ever think of such a division? This is really too amazing!”

Harvey solemnly met Suo Jia’s gaze and said calmly, “This is something I surmised after thousands of battles. On the battlefield, a corporal that only has to command 10 Knights is most appropriate. Commanding any more would lead to loss of control, and commanding any less would be wasting energy and intelligence. If there are too few subordinates, the amount of tasks one can carry out is limited.”

“Mmmmmm...” Suo Jia nodded along furiously with General Harvey’s words. Indeed...10 Knights could assault, 100 Knights could break through an army, and 1000 could raze the area. This kind of division couldn’t be any more well-suited. If there were only 4-5 Knights, it wouldn’t be possible to form an attack, as the amount of power would be lacking.

Suo Jia grabbed a pen on his table and approved the divisions with flourish. He then handed the form back to General Harvey, and smiled, “Alright, you can go back and prepare now. Tomorrow at 8am, I’ll formally appoint them!”

After hearing Suo Jia's order, General Harvey sternly saluted in respect once more, then turned around to leave the room.

After seeing General Harvey leave, Suo Jia turned around to look at Jason. Seeing Suo Jia's gaze, Jason hurriedly placed the form in his hand onto the table and said, "This is the administration division for the pike users!"

Suo Jia casually accepted the form and examined it closely. He then furrowed his brows; within the entire pike user group, the only commanding officer was Jason. He then created a new type of soldier: the messenger soldiers. There were a total of 10 messenger soldiers.

Stunned, Suo Jia raised his head and looked at Jason in confusion, "General Jason, isn't your position a bit too simple? In the entire corps, you are the only commanding officer. How are you going to command the entire army?"

Jason's expression remained unchanged as he replied, "Viscount Suo Jia, you need to know that defending and attacking are completely opposite things. Attacks must be diverse, as well as penetrating. On the other hand, defense requires stability and sturdiness. All of us have been training for a long time. Masters proficient in defense aren't necessary, nor should they have commanding officer positions established!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia put down the form and asked curiously, "Tell me, exactly what differences are there between defense and attack? Honestly, I still don't really understand this!"

Seeing Suo Jia sincerely seek instruction, General Jason's lit up in admiration. He had lived for so long, and encountered many bosses that clearly didn't understand anything, yet pretended they did. All the commands they had issued were ignorant, but he couldn't ever protest.

The most unbearable part was that these bosses had been figures that couldn't be argued against. They had seemed to be stronger than anyone else, but they were actually no different from idiots. Even if they were beyond wrong, they stubbornly refused to admit their mistakes. When they lost battles, they'd then go and blame their commanders. It had been extremely suffocating.

However, Suo Jia was clearly different. If General Harvey did well, Suo Jia would praise him and flatter him. On the other hand, although he didn't understand Jason's arrangements, he still genuinely wanted to learn, and patiently listen to an explanation. A commanding officer like this was one Jason had never even heard of, let alone met.

Jason explained, "Attacks require constant change: splitting soldiers and paths, then executing combined attacks in ambush... all of these rely on variation. However, defense is different, and cannot be arranged the same way attacks are."

Jason paused for a bit before continuing, "Defense pays particular attention to maintaining the same state. If I assigned 10 high ranked military officers to defense, regardless of how well coordinated they are, there would be still be gaps and loopholes. Enemies would then use these openings to charge straight through.

Such a conclusion would be hard to avoid.”

Only when the whole defense army was fused together as one, would the enemies be unable to find any cracks. All the soldiers were to listen to Jason’s commands alone. His orders would be spread around through the messenger soldiers, and then the entire group would simultaneously execute it. That way, despite there being 5000 people, they would act as one united being. Everyone would follow a single person’s commands and act accordingly, which would prevent any openings and holes from appearing. This was an ironset, perfect defense.

“Pa!” Although Suo Jia didn’t understand all of Jason’s words, he understood a majority of it. Defense and attack did indeed have differences. If the army in charge of defense were split into 5 branches, cracks and holes would inevitably appear. This would provide the enemy an advantage. That’s why the pike users couldn’t be divided up. They were like a single shield, a unified body, that couldn’t be split apart!

Without another word, Suo Jia picked up his pen once more and happily signed the form before handing it back to Jason. “Very good. What you said does indeed make sense. Just like I said earlier, you should go back and start preparations. I’ll officially confer your rank upon you tomorrow morning at 8!”

Jason took the form and respectfully responded, then turned around and left the room. In that moment, the only ones remaining in the room were Suo Jia and Roger. Suo Jia smiled at Roger and pointed to the fatty’s chair, “Alright, let’s sit down and talk!”

Roger couldn't help but feel stunned at these words. He then gratefully shot Suo Jia a glance. He understood that the reason Suo Jia acted in such a way was because it was most appropriate and suitable.

He was different from General Jason and Harvey; they were official soldiers. On the other hand, Roger was only a slave soldier. Suo Jia had invited him to sit down in order to declare where Roger stood. In front of Suo Jia, although Roger didn't follow the military etiquette, Suo Jia viewed Roger as another aristocrat. Roger didn't refuse, as he was never an artificial person that said things he didn't actually mean.

Looking at Roger in delight, Suo Jia clapped his hands together and loudly declared, "Servants, bring some fruits and pastries here!" Following this order, maids carrying the food walked in.

Suo Jia smiled as he leaned back into his chair and leisurely told Roger, "Ok, now...let's talk about the slave soldiers' situation. Do you have any good proposals?"

Roger smiled and didn't hesitate to pick up a fruit and toss it into his mouth. Although the fruit was nothing special, it was something that he hadn't eaten in ages. As a slave soldier, there was no opportunity to ever eat fruits.

As he chewed the sweet fruit, Roger mumbled, "It's very difficult to give the slave soldiers any significant roles. However, during the past 6 years, I've already strived to gather together the absolute

elites amongst them and formed a small group. There are nearly 100 people that each possess extremely special abilities!”

As he swallowed the fruit, Roger continued, “If you let them enter the battlefield, you surely won’t be disappointed. We aren’t specialized military personnel, and haven’t received training since we were young; that’s why we’re mere amateurs on the battlefield. However...there are various things that we are experts in, and one could even say that we are the founders of such things!”

Chapter 209: A Thief Even In The Dark (Part 1)

“Various things?” Suo Jia asked curiously.

Roger smiled mysteriously and said in a low voice, “By various things, I mean things like stealing, slipping drugs, terrorism, etc. However...although these things seem minor, these men all have extensive experience in such activities. Even these seemingly trivial tasks can be teased into an art!”

Roger praised, “On the battlefield, we’re mere appetizers. But if you let us mingle with the crowd, it’ll be an entirely different story. Our abilities are all at frightening levels. Although we are only a group of 100, the destruction we can havoc is greater than a 100,000 man army!”

“Oh! So amazing!” Suo Jia exclaimed excitedly as he was lured in by Roger’s words.

“Mhm...” Roger nodded and chuckled, “Although I don’t dare to say anything else, if you want an intelligence network, assassination, abduction, extortion, terrorism, or poisoning, we are your experts!”

Suo Jia’s eyes lit up brighter and brighter as he heard Roger’s explanation. This whole time, his greatest deficiency had been power in this aspect. He never had any clue what developments were going on in the matters around him, and it could even be said that this information was inaccessible. This made Suo Jia

extremely cautious with every step. He had to be able to adjust according to the slightest change in situation at any moment in time.

However, if he really did have a branch of people like this, it would be great. No matter what he did, it would be much easier to carry out. In addition, it would present more options to deal with any situation.

Suo Jia abruptly slapped the table and declared, “Very good. Go and compile a list of those elites for me immediately. Tomorrow morning, I’ll set up the appropriate arrangements!”

Roger smiled and pulled out a form from his pocket, casually throwing it on the table. “I prepared it all ages ago, haha...there are a total of 87 people on here.”

Roger stood up and threw out the fruit’s pit before leisurely saying, “Okay, Viscount Suo Jia, since it’s quite late already, I won’t disturb you any longer.”

Storing away the form, Suo Jia stood up and replied, “Mm, it is indeed pretty late. You should go back and rest too.”

Suo Jia opened his interspatial ring and took out a bottle of rum, tossing it towards Roger. He smiled and said, “Here’s a bottle of alcohol for you to drink. Hehe...this is a fine drink that has successfully passaged through the Greater Trade Routes, you know!”

Roger caught the bottle. As he examined its label, Roger couldn't help but lick his lips in excitement and say, "Aiya, I can't remember how long it's been since I last drank alcohol, let alone one this fine of a quality. Mm...thanks a ton!" Roger put away the bottle and with a wave of farewell, turned around to leave the room.

The night passed without incident. The next morning, the alarm bell rang, and all the regular soldiers and slave soldiers once more gathered at the plaza. Suo Jia had also appeared on the inspection stage again. However, today was different from yesterday because aside from Suo Jia, Generals Harvey, Jason, and Roger also stood there. Behind them were dozens of other soldiers' figures.

Suo Jia broke the silence as he declared, "Alright. After sorting matters out for an entire night, I now proclaim that the Emerald Angels Knights group established. The head of command will be me, and the vice-commander position will be held by General Harvey. Also...General Harvey will be the general of the Emerald Angels Knights group!"

Suo Jia pulled out a form and read out the names of the 5 lieutenants, 50 sergeants, and 500 corporals that were receiving their letters of appointment. Of course, it wasn't possible to read each of their names, so he just passed the letters to General Harvey for him to distribute. This was much more efficient.

As the soldiers were cheering, General Harvey happily accepted the letters and left the inspection stage with dozens of his supports. However, he didn't actually leave the area, as the assembly hadn't yet ended.

After looking at General Harvey with an encouraging expression, Suo Jia pulled out another form and read aloud, “Next, the pike users group will merge with the Blood Angels mercenary group. The head of command will still be me, and the vice-commander position will be held by General Jason. Also...General Jason will be the general of the Blood Angels mercenary group!”

After this declaration, Suo Jia handed the corresponding letters of appointment to Jason. With a respectful salute, Jason excitedly accepted the papers. What shocked him wasn't his status as a general, but his status as the vice-commander of the Blood Angels. This no longer fell into the category of army ranks!

Suo Jia smiled as he saw Jason leave the stage, and took out the last form. After sweeping his gaze around, Suo Jia smiled and stored away the form once more. “On the other hand, Roger and his subordinates, the elite soldiers, will merge with the Dark Angels thief group. Just as before, I will be the head of command for the Dark Angels, while Roger will be the vice-commander. At the same time...Roger will be the Dark Angels' general!”

Roger paused, then sincerely said, “I really want read out the names of the members in the Dark Angels group, but everyone knows that as thieves, we must keep such information a secret. For the sake of ensuring that our future operations will run smoothly, I will have to change my original intention, and will refrain from announcing the names!”

Suo Jia paused, then said solemnly, “There are 110,000 citizens in our Dawn City. 100,000 of them are slave soldiers. In reality, this

place here is actually a city of slaves!”

Hearing Suo Jia’s words, everyone lowered their heads. They all knew that what Suo Jia said was the truth. But despite this, nobody was willing to hear it.

Seeing everyone’s gloomy expressions, Suo Jia abruptly raised his voice and announced, “I am unable to restore your statuses as ordinary citizens. However, I can guarantee that within Dawn City, my administration will not treat you as slaves, nor will we use you as cannon fodder, and send you to your deaths on the battlefield. You are all Dawn City’s citizens. There are no slaves here!”

“Gasp...” The slave soldiers couldn’t help but sharply inhale at Suo Jia’s words. They all knew that being freed from their slave status was impossible. Even the Emperor himself couldn’t do it, let alone Suo Jia. After all...there were 100,000 of them here.

However, regardless of their status, Suo Jia had actually stated that he wouldn’t view them as slaves. This alone was already a great deal. As slaves, they couldn’t enjoy the same treatment as ordinary people, so something like this was unimaginable. Actually, just the fact that they wouldn’t be used as cannon fodder was already enough to make everyone wild with joy.

Suo Jia looked at the joyous slave soldiers and continued, “I cannot promise anything if you leave Dawn City. But as long as you remain here, I can guarantee that from now on, everyone is a citizen of Dawn, and can enjoy all the same human rights!”

“Whoosh...” As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, the slave soldiers all raised their hands in unison. A tide of applause rang out and filled the air. A slave soldier’s strongest desire was nothing else but gaining human rights!

Seeing that the slave soldiers had been stirred up, Suo Jia smiled and stretched out a hand, gesturing for them to quiet down. After the applause had faded out, Suo Jia continued, “As you guys will be citizens, I will no longer provide for anyone. If you want to gain something, then you’ll have to do labor, go work, and go to battle. If you make any military achievements or produce any results, I can promise you now that you will be the same as any other citizen, and gain promotions and awards. You may even be able to become a noble in Dawn City. If you become an aristocrat here, you can enjoy the status of a typical aristocrat, and all of its privileges!”

Chapter 210: A Thief Even In The Dark (Part 2)

“Wa!” All the slave soldiers cried out in shock. Although everything that Suo Jia had promised was only valid within Dawn City’s perimeters, it was already enough to make any of these people ecstatic. As long as they didn’t leave Dawn City, there wouldn’t be a problem. Within Dawn City, they were no longer slaves, but commonfolk! This alone was enough.

As the crowd cheered, Suo Jia smiled and said, “Soon, I will open a military training ground to train a pike users group, an archer group, and a Knights group. If you are interested, you may first enroll. After training, you can all become the most outstanding regular soldiers. Then you’ll be able to enjoy monthly salaries and allowance, and be treated the exact same way the current soldiers are!”

Suo Jia looked at the excited crowd and loudly announced, “Even if you can’t become a soldier, that’s fine as well. You can use labor as exchange for anything. This includes money, reputation, status, and even noble ranks. In general...each effort and drop of sweat you put in will be engraved in memory, never to be forgotten. As long as you pay something, you’ll definitely get reciprocated.”

Suo Jia’s arrangements massively stirred up the slave soldiers’ motivation and enthusiasm. In only a few days, 10,000 each of Knights, swordsmen, pike users, and archers were chosen from the 100,000 man army.

After carefully choosing the soldiers with various talents, the

remaining 60,000 soldiers were combined by Suo Jia to become long-range archers. This role didn't require accuracy, just arm strength to pull the bows, so anyone could join.

Although the 60,000 long-range archers' accuracy was extremely low, shooting together with so many people formed a rain of arrows that was completely impossible to evade. There was no need for aiming at all. The arm strength needed was the same they used to excavate, move, and stack stones around, and could thus be trained.

Thus, aside from the chosen 40,000 soldiers, the remaining ones spent every morning, afternoon, and evening training for an hour. They spent the rest of the time doing labor. The reason why they were arranged to train for so long was because although they didn't require accuracy, it was still better the more well-aimed their attacks were. Not being able to shoot accurately at all wouldn't do either.

Following the establishment of the different types of soldiers, Suo Jia began to procure weapons and ammunition without restraint. The money he spent flowed out like water, but luckily, Naifa Lian's father hadn't exploited much recently. Thus, it was surely enough to purchase all these things.

Firstly, new armors and weapons had to be purchased for the Mengma Knights group, as well as the pike users. This didn't require money, as they could directly get them replaced with new ones. If they spent money purchasing these things, it would be a waste of money. Just 10,000 armors would be a sky-high price.

Aside from the regular army, Suo Jia also had to purchase 60,000 armors and weapons for the specially selected regular slave soldiers. They were currently wearing the serial numbered armors and weapons in the storehouse that had accumulated over the years. Just as for the other soldiers, they were exchanged with new ones! The quality was first-class too!

What was really costly was the 60,000 informal slave soldiers. For them alone, Suo Jia had purchased 100,000 hard leather armors, as well as 100,000 longbows. The reason he had bought so much was so that if they wore down during battle, they'd be able to switch with others at that specific moment. After all...these things weren't items that anyone else would exchange with them.

In order to minimize costs, Suo Jia didn't purchase wooden and bamboo arrows. Those things would break after a single use. Although they were cheap, they weren't worth their cost. Instead, Suo Jia bought metal arrows. Although one couldn't say they lasted forever, they could be used at least over a hundred times each.

In addition, the metal arrows were metal, so they had powerful piercing ability. The only downside was that they were a bit on the heavier side, so light bows and horn bows couldn't be used. Only the longbows would be able to take the arrows. Although the distance the shot arrow could travel was decreased because of its weight, its destructive ability had increased. The metal's magic properties decreased the effects of battle qi and magic shield defenses. It could be said that even War Saints wouldn't be able to face this kind of attack head-on.

Although the arms were already purchased, it would take a long time for the long-distance shipments. The Mengma Knights had evolved their Mengmas, but the process hadn't been completed yet, and would take some more time. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes group had gone to escort Naifa Lian's family, and then advanced to the Atomic Alchemy Labs to ship the Magic Automatons back. Thus, they hadn't returned either.

For a period of time, only the 5,000 pike users could protect Dawn City. As for the slave soldiers, aside from working every day, they also quietly waited for the day their weapons and armors would arrive. To a slave soldier, owning a set of armor and weapon would unconditionally raise their chances of survival by a significant amount.

That evening, Suo Jia secretly called in the Dark Angels thief group's nearly 100 members. The great hall of the large city lord's residence was completely filled. At single glance, there were various guys of different shapes and forms that were all sitting sloppily in chairs in an strange and unseemly fashion. However, Suo Jia knew that these seemingly unsophisticated fellows actually all had unique abilities.

Suo Jia raised a wine glass at Roger and smiled as he said, "You can set aside any other matters temporarily. Tomorrow morning, you should lead everyone out of the city and quickly find, as well as rescue, your family members. Then you can come back and help me!"

Roger's eyes couldn't help but tear up at these words. Suo Jia had not only given him patronage and protection, but had even placed

so much trust in him and given him an important position. This kindness was something that Roger had to reciprocate. However... just as Suo Jia had said, Roger had to set off early and go save his family. Otherwise, the later he left, the more likely it would be that he'd lose more family members.

Suo Jia pulled out a crystal card and handed it to Roger. "There are 10 billion gold coins here. Take this first. If you can buy them back, don't try to fight. Although we aren't afraid of getting involved, once a matter gets too out of hand, it'll be disadvantageous for your rescue mission!"

Roger shakingly accepted the crystal card without saying a word. He heavily nodded and said in a low voice, "Don't worry, Viscount Suo Jia. No matter what, I'll settle this matter as quickly as possible, and come back to help you."

Suo Jia smiled and nodded. Standing up, he said calmly, "It's already quite dark outside. You guys can continue drinking here, I'll go and deal with some public property matters!"

In response to Suo Jia's farewell, all the Dark Angels group members stood up and watched him leave. Although they hadn't known him for long, Suo Jia's every action was deeply respected!

After walking outside the door, Suo Jia suddenly stopped in his tracks. After contemplating for a bit, Suo Jia coldly said, "When you guys set out, you must be extremely cautious of everything. But you must remember this: As a member of the Dark Angels thief group, you cannot actively stir up trouble. But if someone dares to provoke us? Don't fear anything. No matter what, you cannot

lower the Dark Angels thief group's reputation!"

"Haha..." Roger chuckled darkly at Suo Jia's words and replied, "Don't worry, Viscount Suo Jia. If anyone dares to bully us, they must really be tired of living. Just you watch, we, the experts specially selected from such a large number of criminals, are all experts in crime! Even if it doesn't count on the battlefield, mounting sneak attacks and assassinating others are our specialties!"

The next morning, Roger led the Dark Angels thief group outside of Dawn City to search and rescue Roger's family members. For the time being, they probably wouldn't be seen again.

Suo Jia looked in the direction where Roger and his group had disappeared, and shook his head with a sigh. At the same time, Naifa Lian next to him asked curiously, "Young Master, why do you attach so much importance to Roger and treat him so well?"

Suo Jia shot a glance at Naifa Lian. These past few days, she had tightly stuck to his side no matter where he went, and very rarely spoke. But every time she did speak, it was always a question.

Suo Jia calmly replied, "The reason I view him with so much importance is because he has both empathy and justice. I can see sincerity in his eyes. To me, this is most valuable."

Suo Jia turned around and looked at Naifa Lian intensely, "And you. I can see ordinariness, calmness, and obviously, sincerity. Otherwise, why would I have allowed you to be at my side this

whole time?”

Naifa Lian trembled slightly, and nodded, seemingly understanding something. She continued to ask, “But, even if you attach so much importance to him, I still don’t understand; why are you willing to risk so much for him? And spend so much manpower, physical resources, as well as money?”

“That...” Suo Jia muttered and scratched his head as he chuckled, “That, is something I can’t explain either. If I want to do something, I just do it. There isn’t much reason behind it.”

After a slight pause, Suo Jia continued, “It’s probably because of his personal charisma and charm. Roger just has that kind of affinity. Strictly speaking, he’s more suited and qualified to be a leader. Don’t you also find him handsome, cool, and outstanding?”

“That...” Naifa Lian hesitated for a bit before firmly replying, “Although he’s quite handsome, he’s a bit old. He’s at least 40 years old, right? In addition....the most important thing for a man isn’t his appearance, but his strength! Although he’s handsome and cool, I don’t think he’s very attractive!”

Chapter 211: Invasion Of Powerful Enemies

(Part 1)

Naifa Lian secretly shot a glance at Suo Jia. In reality, a boy like Suo Jia was more likely to catch her attention. Back when they were at school, he had already been extremely well-known. After getting out in society, he had smoothly increased his wealth as well, and advanced in noble rank. Although Suo Jia himself couldn't tell, his body in others' eyes seemed to be enveloped in a bright halo that hid too many secrets.

For example, in Naifa Lian's eyes, Suo Jia was really extraordinary. He was only around 13 years old, but had already become a Viscount. Moreover, there were tons of experts at his side that were all abnormally powerful. In addition, he also had Dawn Fort as his territory. Exactly how he had done all this? This was, after all, the border station between six countries. How could it be given away as enfeoffment?

Handsome, cool, and heroic were indeed all requirements that drew a girl's attraction. However, these weren't the only things. While appearance was important, power, personality, and charm were more important. Having a mysterious halo enshrouding them was especially poisonous to girls. Once a girl's curiosity about a boy was piqued, she had basically been ensnared.

Seeing Naifa Lian stand there for a long time without speaking, Suo Jia couldn't help but turn his head to look at her inquisitively. To him, Naifa Lian was also extremely mysterious. Her strange footwork in particular, was something that Suo Jia had yearned for for a long time now.

Suo Jia hesitated for a bit before gritting his teeth and saying, “There’s a matter that I’d like to consult with you about. However, I’ve always been too embarrassed to ask.”

“Hm?” Naifa Lian shot a puzzled look at Suo Jia and asked, “What matter? Please go ahead and ask.”

Suo Jia nodded and said, “My question is one that you have the right to not answer. But if you are willing to give me some pointers, I will definitely thank you properly.”

Naifa Lian wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry at Suo Jia’s words. In her mind, Suo Jia had always been extremely bold. She hadn’t imagined that he could have such reserved moments too!

As he looked at the smiling Naifa Lian, Suo Jia’s heart began to race uncontrollably. During the recent chain of battles, he had suddenly discovered a problem: his close combat abilities!

Although a mage was a long-ranged profession...it was extremely difficult to maintain a distance in most battles. The factors in distance included topography, environment, as well as the opponent’s strength, and these influences were too great. In general, as long as the opponent was around equal strength, they’d have the ability to press in.

For example, the battle that day in the City Lord’s residence hall. As soon as he had entered the hall, he had almost immediately been roped into close combat. All the escape routes had been

blocked off. In that moment, there had been no way of creating any distance. In addition, if he did really try moving, how could a mage compare to a warrior?

Without a doubt, once a mage pulled some distance between him and his opponent, the mage would have devastating power that could completely defeat a warrior much stronger than him. However, mages weren't the only people that knew of this; everyone understood this fact. How could the distance be maintained then?

In addition, Suo Jia was to go to the Greater Trade Routes in the future. The situation there would be much more complicated than it was here. Enemies could appear in front of him at any moment. Wanting to maintain distance in such a circumstance was a mere fantasy. If the other party knew he was a mage, it'd be stranger if they did let him draw further away. It was especially true if the mage was up against an assassination or an ambush; it was practically impossible for them to retaliate.

Because of these reasons, Suo Jia had suddenly realized that close combat attacks were most important. Close combat attacks were what mages were worst at. It was also the underlying reason for most losses that mages suffered from in battle.

Theoretically, a person's true ability couldn't be calculated according to their strongest point, but their weakest point. And close combat was undoubtedly a mage's greatest weakness.

In terms of close combat, Suo Jia had the Diamond Charge, Water God's Shield, Revolving Frozen Gas, and the Ice Stream

Technique...but all of these were for offense or defense. None of them were evasion skills. Even the Wave Walking's steps couldn't do anything. With the help of combat boots, they could help the user move in mid-air, but they didn't have any appropriate footwork as assistance.

However, Suo Jia had discovered the strange footwork that Naifa Lian used. Her steps made it so that the opposite party had absolutely no way of following her movements or her trajectory. When it seemed like she was going left, her body would twist weirdly and she'd turn to the right. It seemed impossible for anyone to capture her.

Currently, Suo Jia's long-ranged magic attacks already possessed quite a bit of power. However, Suo Jia was grieved to discover that in his recent battles, whether it was a brawl against Duo Mei, the fight to steal the Atlantis armor, or the bloody battle in the City Lord's residence hall, the last stretch always relied on close combat to deal with the enemy. If he lost in the close combat, he'd lose the entire battle. No matter how powerful he was in long range, it would prove to be of no use.

Suo Jia abruptly raised his head to gaze deeply at Naifa Lian. He knew that attack, defense, and auxiliary moves were all things he could slowly master by himself. However, evasive footwork required another to teach him. At the very least, they had to introduce it to him.

Suo Jia bravely said through clenched teeth, "I remember that I once saw you in Holy Light Academy around 4-5 years ago. Back then...you seemed to be using some strange footwork. I'd like to

know, what exactly is that footwork? Why does it look so abnormal?”

“What! You saw me 4-5 years ago?” Naifa Lian cried out in astonishment.

Suo Jia nodded and said bitterly, “I did see you back then. At that time, it was because I had glanced at you that Kaos had slapped me a few times. That was the first time I had ever been beaten in my life!”

Naifa Lian’s jaw dropped in shock. She finally realized exactly what the enmity between Suo Jia and Kaos was. She just hadn’t ever imagined that the hatred between them had arisen because of her.

Seeing the tongue-tied Naifa Lian, Suo Jia smiled and said, “Originally, I had prepared to ask you for guidance 3-4 years ago. But because of the trouble with Kaos, I went back to enter closed-door training in order to improve my magic power and spirit power. Thus, I ended up forgetting the importance of the footwork I saw.”

Suo Jia looked at Naifa Lian and said sincerely, “That’s why, I wonder if you can teach me that mysterious footwork. I really need it.”

“That...” Naifa Lian couldn’t help but blush at his request, and she was at a complete loss for words.

Seeing Naifa Lian's conflicted expression, Suo Jia's face fell as he said gloomily, "If it's really too difficult of a request, then I won't ask. There's no need to feel conflicted."

"No, that's not it..." Naifa Lian's face flushed darker. In reality, although Naifa Lian seemed extremely proud and aloof on the outside, she had only been a 15-16 year old girl back then as well. She hadn't really liked speaking much, but she had still been a charming girl with a playful nature, and this aspect of her hadn't changed.

Naifa Lian stole a glance at Suo Jia, and she could clearly see the disappointment on his face. She gritted her teeth and suddenly said, "Actually I don't really have any footwork to teach you. It's not that I'm unwilling to teach, but more that I simply walk in lattices for fun!"

"Walk in lattices for fun". When Suo Jia heard this, his expression turned to one of complete shock.

"Yea..." Nodding firmly, Naifa Lian said in embarrassment, "Weren't the central roads in the academy paved with multi-colored pebbles? Actually, I was just stepping on the blue stones one after another down the road. I wasn't actually using some type of footwork."

"Ack!" Suo Jia was completely dumbstruck at Naifa Lian's words. He clearly remembered that the central path at the academy had split the academy in half. There were two parts of the school on either side, and this path was the only one in between.

The path had been paved with green and blue stones. There had been blue stones embedded on its surface, giving people the feeling that it was a flowing river. Those blue stones were like the pebbles along a stream.

After standing there stunned for a long while, Suo Jia abruptly clapped his hands together. He had suddenly realized that those stones probably hadn't been randomly paved. They must have followed some type of diagram. That meant this diagram contained that footwork!

Suo Jia didn't dare waste any more time. He hurriedly wrote a letter to Wen Ya, asking for her to help him go to Holy Light Academy and find that diagram. If she couldn't find them, then she was to draw out the central path and send it to Suo Jia.

Wen Ya's ability to get things done was unquestionable. After all...her status and position were all established there. Soon afterwards...the diagram was laid out in front of Suo Jia. In addition, an overhead image of the central path was also displayed in front of him.

Chapter 212: Invasion Of Powerful Enemies

(Part 2)

Just as Suo Jia had anticipated, the diagram clearly showed a type of footwork. However, someone had mistaken it as a construction outline, and used it to pave the road.

The central path's overhead image was about 80% identical to the footwork's diagram. However...the construction hadn't been very strictly controlled, so there were some differences in subtle areas. Footwork was something where the slightest centimeter of difference was equivalent to 1000 li. This footwork diagram was the most accurate depiction, and was also the most powerful one.

However, although the effects of the overhead image's depiction was slightly different, that didn't mean it was completely useless. In addition, it wasn't very complicated, and was suitable for anyone to learn. It wasn't as difficult and profound as the original diagram, and would be much more appropriate to use as learning materials for the soldiers. It could be said that the overhead image was a simplified version of the footwork, and the ultimate profound essence!

Suo Jia gave the overhead image to Naifa Lian and told her to instruct everyone to immediately construct a central path according to it. From then on, everyone shipping stones or passing through the passage had to step on only the blue stones as they crossed. This would subtly integrate the footwork into their abilities.

Afterwards, Suo Jia began a closed door training to fully

concentrate on studying this footwork. Suo Jia knew that this footwork would decide his evasive abilities in close combat. Its uses in his close ranged attacks and defenses were something that no amateur could possibly understand. If a suitable footwork wasn't integrated, a person would never be able to display their fullest power. Defenses also wouldn't reach their stablest state.

Suo Jia held the diagram in his hand and examined it closely. There were two words written on the paper: Rising Waves! Below the words was a complex series of blue dots. When he counted them closely, he realized that there were over a hundred of them!

After an entire week, Suo Jia completely memorized the entire footwork. He then began to train in it according to his memory. After practicing, Suo Jia immediately discovered the miraculous points of this footwork.

Actually, this footwork was a deceiving-type step. When it seemed one was going left, they were actually going right. While they'd step to their left, their body would actually be charging towards the right. Although they clearly seemed to be advancing, their body was actually retreating.

Of course, this footwork wasn't as simple as using opposites. While one stepped right, they could move in an entirely different direction. Forwards, backwards, left, and right were all options. This was the footwork's special ability.

The most miraculous part was that the footwork didn't just deceive the eyes, but the ears and the mind as well. When one stepped out, whether the opposite party was using their eyes to

watch or their ears to hear, it would seem that the person was heading towards the right. However, their body was actually moving in some other direction, a complete trick.

If the other party closed their eyes, it might prove to be somewhat of an improvement. But once they opened their eyes to watch, their entire mind and consciousness would fall into confusion. No matter what, the other party would think the person was moving forwards. Yet the person was moving backwards. How was one supposed to attack then? If the other party tried to attack while a person was retreating, the person would've long since moved away by the time the attack was initiated.

However, although this footwork was magical, and Suo Jia had memorized it all, he discovered that practicing and mastering this footwork was really too difficult. In fact, it was outrageous!

Suo Jia stood in the room, his right leg shifting as his left foot brushed the ground. He moved backwards, then his left foot stopped. Then his left leg shifted, and his right foot pushed off the ground. These alternating moves were the reverse moves for moving forwards and backwards. Although it sounded simple, doing it accurately was extremely hard.

Firstly, if he wanted to do it correctly, his actions had to be identical to if he were moving forwards. It was only the difference of which direction his foot exerted force in. On the outside, it looked like he was advancing, but his body was actually going backwards. This difficulty was so great that even if he trained for his entire lifetime, he couldn't possibly achieve his ideal point.

That required natural gift!

In addition, one step to the left while the leg secretly exerted force to push the body to the right seemed like he was drifting in the wind. It completely betrayed common sense, which made it impossible for people to judge his true trajectory.

In a battle, a missed attack could lead to an extremely grim outcome. Attacks needed energy; the more energy was exerted, the more destructive the attack became. But once an attack missed, a cooldown period was necessary to retract one's energy and relaunch another attack. This cooldown period was enough time for the enemy to successfully evade, then send a fatal attack to the defenseless person!

For an entire week, Suo Jia stayed in closed door training. He quietly trained in the footwork every day, and his entire person began to seem more and more like a ghost. His movements were barely discernible, almost unfathomable. When he seemed to go left, he would suddenly be on the right. His feet didn't seem to stick to the ground, and it gave an eerie and frightening feeling.

One could say for certain that Suo Jia had already learned the footwork. However, its strength was in deceiving others, so if he wanted to utilize its full might, he needed to maximize its duping abilities. This was also precisely why it was so difficult. Even after spending his entire lifetime, Suo Jia would never master it to completion.

Fortunately, Suo Jia was still young. Although the initial learning process had been very hard, he had improved quickly. In

reality, it was basically a dance. However, it was extremely strange, a dance routine that nobody had ever seen.

“Dong, dong, dong...” While Suo Jia was completely immersed in training, a heavy sound of knocking came from outside. He suddenly stopped, and shouted, “Come in, the door is unlocked!”

The door was quickly pushed open, and Naifa Lian rushed in with a grave expression, “Bad news, Young Master. The Thief Alliance’s armies seemed to have come together with the intention of harming us! Right now...our purchases have already been blockaded off!”

“What!” Suo Jia’s body shook as he looked over at Naifa Lian in shock. After all this time, Suo Jia had pretty much forgotten the matter about the Thief Alliance armies. Only now after suddenly hearing Naifa Lian’s reminder did he abruptly realize that he had been too careless.

At the moment, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were still out on a mission. The 5,000 Mengas hadn’t yet finished evolving, so the Knights couldn’t fight at the moment. As Knights, leaving their mounts meant handicapping themselves so that they couldn’t fight at all.

The most critical part was that the slave soldiers’ armors and weapons hadn’t yet arrived. This was the most headache-inducing part. Suo Jia couldn’t deny the fact that he had made a huge mistake in his arrangements. He shouldn’t have rushed to dispatch the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes when the Mengmas were evolving.

However, it was already too late to be considering this. Fortunately...Dawn City finally had a fixed defensive power. The 5,000 pike users, in addition to the 10,000 slave pike users, 10,000 long-ranged archers, 10,000 swordsmen, and 10,000 Knights, were all fully equipped, and could go out into battle at any moment. However, the slave soldiers' trainings hadn't really completed yet, so it was hard to say exactly how powerful they were.

Suo Jia loudly declared, "Immediately spread my orders. The 40,000 regular slave soldiers are to temporarily stop their labor and focus entirely on preparing for battle. The 5,000 regular pike users are to go to their stations on the walls, and be prepared to defend against the Thief Alliance army's attacks at any moment!"

Suo Jia paused for a moment before continuing, "Also, the 60,000 slave soldiers are to temporarily stop their construction on the city border's walls, and instead turn their concentration onto excavating more stones to improve the city walls in the direction of Holy Light!"

At the moment the city border walls had 100 meter long walls that were already over 20 meters high. However, the walls facing Holy Light were only 4 meters long, and only around 2 stories tall. Although this wasn't short either, it was still not enough. After all...walls made from stacking stones had an extremely large slant to them, and the enemies could easily follow the stones to run up.

Actually, the gathered stones were now using the original 2 meter tall walls as the central point and being piled on either side of it. This didn't require any specialized artisan; it was merely stacking

rocks on top of each other. The taller the rock stacks were, the taller the city walls became. Eventually, they'd become like small mountains, and this would make the wall construction complete.

All the slave soldiers knew that these walls were their lifeline. Thus, nobody dared to slack off, and labored day and night. Finally...after the fifth layer, the Thief Alliance's army finally appeared in the distant plains.

Chapter 213: Overwhelming Victory (Part 1)

As soon as the enemies appeared, Dawn City immediately spurred into action. The 5000 pike users formed a large defense formation at the city gates, and any enemy that tried to pass through was met with merciless slaughter. These soldiers that were experts in battle qi were the elites of the Empire, and weren't afraid of any enemy.

Originally...if the Mengma Knights had been available, the pike users would've guarded the doors while the Mengma Knights attacked long-range from within the walls so that any enemy invader would be destroyed to the point where not even a piece of their armor remained. However, as the Mengma beasts were currently in the state of evolution, the Mengma Knights were restricted from acting, as they had absolutely no source of strength.

Suo Jia bitterly smiled at the 10 meter long line of city walls. He could only dispatch all the slave soldiers to those walls. Even if they didn't have weapons, the ground was full of stones to throw. Suo Jia believed that this was still a lot more effective than using them as cannon fodder.

Facing a powerful enemy, the regular slave soldiers in all directions picked up their weapons and equipped their armors. Although they weren't experts in battles, they had been part of the troops for a long time, and weren't afraid of battle. All of them held their breaths as they waited for the battle to start.

Outside Holy Light City, the Thief Alliance was quickly gathering

together. Their numbers reached nearly 100,000. From the distance, all one could see was a stretch of black that seemed to cover the entire plains.

Suo Jia looked into the horizon, and secretly began to worry. Judging by his current circumstances, his and the enemy's numbers were pretty much the same. Dawn had 100,000 soldiers, as did the thief army outside. However, he couldn't forget that he had 60,000 slave soldiers who were still bare to their arms, and only had rocks as their weapons!

In contrast, the Thief Alliance was different. Although one couldn't say they were all elites, they all wore neat armors and held glittering weapons in their hands. This was something the slave soldiers couldn't currently compare to at all. Although the battle hadn't yet started, the other party seemed to have already secured victory.

However, Suo Jia knew that they also had something good: the 40,000 regular slave soldiers. These 40,000 soldiers were in full body armor, and held pikes, longbows, swords and shields. Only those 10,000 Knights, because of lack of mounts, couldn't be used to their maximum potential. However, just relying on their armor and the war blades in their hands was enough to go against elite troops.

Seeing the dense, black mass of the Thief Alliance's army off in the horizon, Suo Jia knew that he had to push through this battle. Once the opposite party began, they'd definitely try an experimental attack first to verify Dawn City's military strength. Then, they'd suppress the whole army line. If Suo Jia couldn't give

his counterpart a painful attack in return by this point, the results of this battle would be worrying!

A light bulb flashed in Suo Jia's mind. He loudly announced, "Send these orders down: The 40,000 regular slave soldiers are all to hide behind the nearest city walls' construction. When the alarm bell rings, all troops are to charge in. If the bell doesn't go off, nobody is to move. Anyone that disobeys will be beheaded!"

Following Suo Jia's commands, the 40,000 regular slave soldiers quickly retreated to the nearby walls' construction. At the same time, the leader of the thief army outside the city had already initiated a probing attack. Seeing the thief army rapidly approach, Suo Jia roared in anger, "My fellow soldiers, no matter what, we must persevere through this wave of attacks. Go and crush them ruthlessly!"

Although they didn't know what exactly Suo Jia was planning, all the slave soldiers understood that this wasn't the moment to shrink back. No matter what happened, they had to attack. If they bravely charged forwards, perhaps there was a chance that they'd survive. On the battlefield, the more one retreated, the faster they'd be meeting death!

In a moment, all the slave soldiers lifted rocks the size of their heads and quickly aimed at the top of the city walls, prepared to attack the thief army outside the city at any moment.

Soon afterwards, the Thief Alliance's army rushed to the city walls. Although these thieves were wearing leather armor and held sharp blades in their hands, a single glance was enough to tell that

the armor was beyond tattered, and the weapons were chipped all over as well. It was clear to see that these were the equivalent to slave soldiers in their army. They were used to test the enemies' skills and become cannon fodder, which nothing else but slave soldiers could be used to describe.

Dawn City's walls were actually just large piles of rock that were 4-5 meters tall. They slanted at a 60 degree angle, and it was clear to see that one could easily jump onto the rocks and race up. At that point...one needed to consider defensive abilities. The slightest hint of retreat would cause all the enemies to advance. Then...the enemies would all enter without stopping, and this Holy Light would fall into the enemy's hands.

Finally, after some hesitation, the thief soldiers all walked up to the precipitous rock slope, and began to climb up. Seeing this, General Jason finally gave orders.

“Charge...charge! Charge!” Following General Jason's lingering shouts, the dozen or so previously idle and bored messenger soldiers all began to shout loudly as well. Hearing this, the 60,000 slave soldiers strained their throats to wildly join in. They raised stones high above their heads and began to wildly jump up onto the walls.

In that moment, all the thieves were shocked to discover that densely packed figures had appeared on the long city walls. Each of the bodies held a rock about the size of one's head, towered high in the air and aimed at them. It looked as if the stones would be smashed down onto the enemy at any moment.

“Shoot...shoot! Shoot!” In that instant, General Jason, as well as the messenger soldiers, once again cried out. Hearing this, all the slave soldiers shouted in unison and began to initiate their attack on the thieves below the walls. Using all their strength, they smashed the rocks in their hands downwards.

The walls that were 10 kilometers long had 10,000 slave soldiers on top of them. They each threw their stones down as hard as they could, then turned around and left the wall. Behind them was a second line of slave soldiers that threw down their stones as well. Then there was a third, a fourth...

Every meter of the wall had 6 slave soldiers walk up one after another and toss the stones in their hands. They would then turn around and continue to grab another rock. Over the past few days, they had excavated enough rocks to last them an entire week!

Without rest, a rain of rocks continued to fly down. The people near the wall became badly mangled. Only the ones that were somewhat distant were able to avoid the attack. For a moment, the thieves all began to retreat in face of such a dense rain of rocks. This was even more frightening than the earth-type magic: Flaming Stone Purgatory.

Just like this, the area along the walls as well as in front of them were covered with over 40,000 thief corpses lying around in a miserable state, which were pitifully collected back. Due to the lack of long-ranged attacks, the enemy's losses had been extremely great. A single clash had injured 40% of their forces! This was something that the thief army couldn't have possibly ever imagined.

Actually, it wasn't only the thief army. Even the ones that had planned this operation, Suo Jia and General Jason, hadn't expected such a result. The battle just now had resulted in zero losses on Dawn City's side. There were only a few hundred slave soldiers that had lost their balances and tumbled down the walls. However, they only suffered from light injuries, and as of now, not a single person had left the battle due to injury.

Having suffered so much, the Thief Alliance's army head of command probably felt extremely ashamed. The army split to reveal a team of strong and healthy thieves wearing yellow leather armor. After organizing their formation, they emitted burning, murderous auras towards the direction of Dawn City.

Seeing the thief army in the distance, General Harvey's expression suddenly changed. He shouted, "Majorly bad news. That's the Flying Locusts thief army. They all have crossbows in their possession, and can kill any enemy within 50 paces of them. That means that once the slave soldiers appear on the city walls, they'll have difficulty avoiding death!"

"Crossbows!" Suo Jia's expression drastically changed. He looked at the 20,000 men or so in the Flying Locusts army and gritted his teeth. Now that matters had reached this stage, he could no longer hide anything. It was time to show his real character now.

Suo Jia declared, "Immediately sound the alarm bell and order the swordsmen, as well as the longbow users, to immediately come to walls and welcome the enemy. As long as we can get rid of the Flying Locusts thieves, it'll be our victory!"

General Jason was stunned for a moment, but he then hit himself in the head and laughed, “Look at me, I even forgot that we still had 40,000 soldiers. Those longbow users are especially important. Although their level of accuracy isn’t good, their shooting range already surpasses 200 paces. They can definitely suppress these Flying Locusts thieves. After all...their crossbows’ ranges are only 50 meters!”

Chapter 214: Overwhelming Victory (Part 2)

Following the booming sound of the alarm bell, countless regular slave soldiers appeared from the city walls. According to the messenger soldiers' orders, they all got onto the walls and began to form a defensive formation like they had in their drills.

This defensive formation was made up of the swordsmen in front, ready to block a rain of arrows at any moment, and to attack any enemies that climbed through the shields' cracks.

Behind these swordsmen were soldiers that held 4.5 meters long pikes in their hands. Before they got close to the swords and shields, the thief army had to first dodge the pike users' jabs. If one didn't want to pay a great and disastrous price, they couldn't even dream of coming close to it!

Behind the pike users were 10,000 archers. After weeks of training, these guys were pretty good already. Although they couldn't accurately hit the same enemy alone, they could at least fire the arrows accurately to a set area, and they could precisely hit things within this 10 meter perimeter.

The troops that had originally been at a distance outside the city walls, the Flying Locusts thieves, had already made their way closer. After continuously analyzing the Flying Locusts army, finally...General Jason barked out another order.

“Shoot...shoot! Shoot!” Jason shouted, followed by the voices of the messenger soldiers, as well as the 10,000 archers. The pike

users lined up behind them also stood up, chattering. The drawn bowstrings were all aimed at the enemies that had already entered the 100 meter perimeter around the city walls.

General Jason commanded, “Target, 100 paces. Attack!”

As soon as General Jason said these words, the ten messenger soldiers all shouted it out at the same time. These ten loud voices mixed together, and the metal horns in their hands also rang out loudly throughout the entire battlefield. “Target, 100 paces. Attack!”

The thousands of archers simultaneously shot their arrows. Loud shouts filled the air as they loosened their fingers, and 10,000 sharp arrows whizzed off their bowstrings and pierced through the space. In an instant, all the thieves within a 90-100 meter perimeter around the city walls had fallen to the ground. Although the archers hadn’t aimed, the rain of arrows was just too dense, making it impossible to evade.

Seeing the sudden storm of arrows, the Flying Locusts thieves were dumbstruck. During that moment they were frozen in shock, General Jason’s voice shouted out once more, “Target, 90 paces. Attack!”

A rain of arrows filled the air once more. The concentrated attacks shot downwards at all the Flying Locusts thieves at once. Nobody could possibly stay standing after such an attack; even Suo Jia wouldn’t have been able to.

Seeing this, the Flying Locusts thieves finally snapped out of their stupors. They all turned around in unison, wanting to flee. However, they had come back to their senses too late. All the Flying Locusts thieves were already within a perimeter of 200 paces around the city walls, which was exactly the Dawn archers' optimal shooting range!

“Target, 180 paces...Attack!” General Jason's voice pierced through the air in such a perilous situation. Following that, 10,000 more sharp arrows whistled through the air above the Flying Locusts thieves. They all watched the sky seemingly turn dark for a moment, then...a sharp, desolate and miserable cry resounded behind them. When they turned around to look, they saw that the Flying Locusts thieves in the hindmost part of the formation had all fallen.

Seeing this, the Flying Locusts army hurriedly began to rush toward the city walls. None of them wanted to face this rain of arrows; it wasn't something one could go against head-on. However...they had only managed to run a few paces before Jason shouted once more, and another wave of arrows fell 80 paces from the city walls. This caused another section of the thieves to go down.

Just like this, 20,000 Flying Locusts thieves were driven away like a horde of pigs. General Jason's troops continued to chase them back and forth, continuously running around in every direction. In the end, not a single person had escaped. The bleeding corpses of the 20,000 thief army littered the ground, dying the area crimson.

In the distance, outside the Thief Alliance army's camp, the commander's face had turned ashen. He hadn't imagined that Dawn City would suddenly have long-ranged archers; it was really too terrifying. Exactly what was going on?

Everyone knew that thieves didn't use shields, and they wore light leather armor. Typically speaking, they'd use assassination techniques, so their weak defenses could generally be overlooked. Their only long-ranged attack was the crossbows. However, the crossbows were small, and their shooting ranges were limited, only around 50 paces. In front of longbows, they couldn't do anything but fall victim to the massacre.

Seeing the already crimson, blood-covered city walls around Dawn City, the Thief Alliance's leader's face seemed to turn the color of dirt. It had only been an hour since the battle had begun, but he had already lost 60,000 soldiers. The 40,000 slave soldiers in front were still easy to handle, but he had lost the 20,000 Flying Locusts thieves, the elites of their side!

The Alliance army's commanding officer knew that originally... he wasn't supposed to lose so badly. This time's loss was because of their miscalculations. He hadn't expected that Dawn City, which always only had pike users and Mengma Knights, would suddenly have so many long-ranged archers appear. As a thief, one couldn't charge in front of an archer, that was just seeking death.

"Bang!" The Alliance's commanding officer fiercely smashed the wine glass in his hand onto the ground. The opposite party had been too cunning. If they had dispatched the long-ranged archers from the start, they wouldn't have been crushed that badly. What

made him depressed was the fact that despite clearly having longbow users, the other party hadn't used them in the beginning. They had waited all the way up until the Flying Locusts army had appeared before acting. Those 20,000 elites had died in vain. This was the commanding officer's greatest regret, as it was the fault of him, the commander, for having fallen into another's calculations.

In reality, although the thieves didn't use shields, they still had armored chariots. These armored vehicles covered with a huge line-up of shields. The thieves could hide behind the shields first to dodge the rain of arrows. However, the shields could only block arrows, not the smashing of rocks. Also, everyone knew that it was because the shooting range of rocks was clearly much lower than that of crossbows that the commander had dispatched the Flying Locusts thieves. But if he had known earlier that there would be archers, this scene wouldn't have occurred.

If they had just blockaded off the archers and stayed behind the armored chariots, they would've been able to use the crossbows to snipe at the slave soldiers tossing rocks. After getting rid of them, the long-ranged archers wouldn't have needed to be feared either. As long as they charged up the slopes of the walls, they could've seized Dawn Fort.

But now, although they still had 40,000 people remaining, the Alliance's commanding officer knew that this battle had been their complete loss. Up until now, the opposite party hadn't suffered a single loss. In contrast, the thieves only had 10,000 armored chariots left, 10,000 secret raid soldiers, and 20,000 conventional soldiers. They didn't have any long-ranged attack abilities. If they charged forwards like this, it wouldn't be a battle, but a suicide.

“F*ck...” Cursing angrily, the Alliance’s commanding officer bellowed, “Everyone, heed my command: immediately retreat. Armored chariots, stay in the back, and prepare to intercept the Mengma Knights!”

Hearing their leader’s orders, all the thieves immediately turned around. The back group went to the front, and began to rush along the path they had come from. At the same time, the 10,000 armored chariot soldiers had already propped their chariots up. They knew that they’d probably be the sacrificial lambs this time. For the sake of covering the majority of the army as they retreated, they had to lay down their own lives.

Seeing the soldiers shaking as they hid behind the armored chariots, the Alliance’s commander couldn’t hold back the shining tears forming in the corner of his eyes. He knew...that under the Mengma Knight’s bombardment, they couldn’t even imagine thinking of leaving alive. But their sacrifices wouldn’t be in vain, because...they would come back. They would definitely seize Dawn City!

Before, the thief army hadn’t dared to attack Dawn City because it was equivalent to offending Holy Light Empire, and they hadn’t had such capabilities. However, they knew that the current Dawn was no longer the Empire’s border station, but Suo Jia’s private enfeoffment. In that case, nobody could possibly complain if they attacked it.

Once they managed to occupy a city like that, the Thief Alliance would have an inaccessible stronghold as their base of operations. After developing for several years, they’d definitely become a

beyond terrifying existence. Most importantly, this location was a zone that bordered all six countries. If they operated it well, their income would absolutely explode!

Suo Jia bitterly smiled as he watched the thief soldiers quickly disperse off into the distance. If the Mengma Knights were still here, then not a single one of them would be able to think of escaping alive. However, the Mengmas were still evolving, so they could only watch the thieves run away. With the thieves' speeds, there was no way they could possibly catch up.

Finally, all the thieves had disappeared, including the 10,000 armored chariots. When they had returned to the thieves' military station, the Alliance's commander had been greatly shocked. He just couldn't understand, why hadn't the Mengma group chased after them? After thinking about it for a bit, he realized that he'd received some wrong information. The Mengma group was the Empire's most powerful corps, so the Empire had surely taken them away. How could they possibly give such formidable forces for someone's private use?

Chapter 215: Eventful Period (Part 1)

Dawn City's battle of attack and defense ended quietly, just like that. Dawn City had achieved the perfect conclusion of absolutely no losses, and obtained victory. They had also gained a large amount of armors and weapons. Most importantly, they had obtained 20,000 crossbows. Those things were precious treasures; even among the entire Thief Alliance, only the 20,000 Flying Locusts had them.

The crossbows were extremely small and exquisite. They were only about the size of a plate, and had a fitting grip. One crossbow could be armed with 10 arrows, and their shooting range was 50 meters. The arrows were as fast as lightning, and had an extremely powerful penetrating ability, as they were the sharp weapons that had been produced by the combined efforts of elves and dwarves.

A single crossbow had a ridiculous value of a million gold. 20,000 of them would be 20 billion, a frightening value. Most importantly, these things couldn't possibly be distributed. These had been privately bought by the thieves. Otherwise, even if one spent an entire decade saving up money, they couldn't possibly get their hands on so many crossbows!

The crossbows were things specifically made for thieves. In addition, they were items that couldn't just be bought anywhere. Majority of them had been passed down through families, or one could buy them at some remote shops. This kind of handicraft had long since disappeared. It could be said that the Flying Locusts were the strongest types of soldiers in the thief army, yet because of their leader's instructions, they had all lost to Dawn City.

Suo Jia didn't waste the 20,000 crossbows. He directly distributed them between the 10,000 swordsmen and lance users. That way, when they were defending the city, they also had the ability to suppress their enemies at mid-range. This would increase their battle abilities to a frightening level.

After the battle, the corpses outside the city were all gathered in one place. Tree oils were poured on them, and all were burned in order to avoid diseases from spreading. The thick black smoke could be seen by anyone within 100 kilometers. After all...it was from the burning of 60,000 corpses.

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The later generations would remember the smoke from Dawn to have risen continuously for an entire day before finally dispersing. The air around Dawn had been completely covered with black, but everyone knew that this was only the beginning. Dawn would have to face much, much more in the future.

Despite having to face future trials and hardships, the people of Dawn City weren't afraid at all. That perfect victory had filled all of them with confidence. At the same time, their faith in Suo Jia had exponentially increased to a ridiculous level. Suo Jia's every order was completely carried out; nobody ever protested.

Perhaps others would find this an exaggeration, but in a battle of 100,000 vs.100,000, Dawn City had managed to keep all their soldiers. If that wasn't a miracle, then what was? Moreover, the

miracle was performed because of a miraculous person. A normal man couldn't possibly create such an event.

Dawn's military campaign of their great victory increased all of the slave soldiers' confidence by 100%. They began to work harder, and became much more active as well. They took the initiative to go out and excavate rocks every day to transport back to the walls and improve them in both height and sturdiness. Dawn's city walls continued to improve at an unfathomable speed.

A few weeks later, the day that Suo Jia turned 13, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes rushed back. Actually, they were supposed to have returned before the great battle. However, they had delayed so much that they only now returned. Suo Jia was extremely unhappy with this.

Duo Mei carefully explained what had happened in response to Suo Jia's inquiries. After escorting Naifa Lian's family to the appointed location, they had immediately rushed to the Atomic Alchemy Labs to bring back all the remaining Magic Automatons. However...at that moment, they had received bad news from the mercenary union.

Because they had left for too long, some thief groups seemed to have forgotten how terrifying the Blood Angels were, and went to steal from merchant groups within the Gold Triangle. In half a month, they had suffered from major losses. In order to prevent any more, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had to rush over and plunder the thief groups. All of them were pulled up by the roots, and were killed so cleanly that no trace of them remained. Only after that did they rush back, but by then, they were already late

by half a month.

Hearing Duo Mei's explanation, Suo Jia not only didn't punish them, but also greatly praised them. Suo Jia's current income was half from the Life Potions, and half from the Gold Triangle. These two major sources of revenue were too important to Suo Jia. Otherwise, where would he get the money for constructing Dawn?

The Empire would ignore the 100,000 slave soldiers' costs in the future. These slave soldiers were all like lords that could eat and drink without end. In a single meal, they could eat more than Suo Jia could ever eat in an entire day.

With the addition of their weapons, armors, and training feeds, they needed money everywhere. In a single day, each one of them consumed up 10 gold coins. 100,000 slave soldiers would be a million gold coins, and this was just daily costs.

In terms of the most typical military equipment, there was a set of armor that costed 100,000, a longbow that costed 100,000, and a war blade that costed 100,000. Just these equipments alone costed 30 billion! In addition, these weapons and armors had short life expectancies; they'd break within a few months. That required exchanges. If their military campaigns were often, they'd have to replace with new sets every 2 battles.

However, would Suo Jia purchase the most typical, bad quality goods? What Suo Jia had ordered were upper grade longbows, blades, and armors. An entire set was worth 3 million, not 300,000. The total amount of money spent was 300 billion!

And this wasn't the most frightening part. Suo Jia had actually spent the most money on the arrows. In Dawn's last battle, Suo Jia's army had shot out over 100,000 arrows. The price of a single arrow was 10 gold, so in that short moment, he'd used up a million gold.

Suo Jia now ordered the best arrows made of refined iron. A single one was worth 100,000 gold, and pretty much wouldn't break even with repeated usage. Suo Jia had ordered 100 million of them. This amount already costed a massive price of a trillion, so essentially all of Suo Jia's money had been used up.

Why would Suo Jia spend so much money to purchase weapons and ammunition? This actually wasn't anything strange. If Dawn City couldn't secure itself so that it was invulnerable to attack, no matter how good their constructions were, they would still instantly be broken through by other parties. If Dawn wanted to protect everything, they needed a powerful armed force. Otherwise, the money would just attract thieves!

Under Suo Jia's command, a batch of Life Potions were sent from Holy Light City. Each one of the slave soldiers were fitted with a belt that had 30 Life Potions in them. If they got injured, they'd be able to just heal themselves. This was basically equivalent to them having the support of a water elemental healing mage. Thus, Dawn City's military power had substantially increased.

This wasn't the only thing. Suo Jia had also specially manufactured a batch of Spirit Potions, Magic Potions, and Endurance Potions, distributing them among the slave soldiers. He

also clarified that none of them were to secretly spread them around. If anyone dared to let it slip, they'd die right there and then!

Actually, there was no need for Suo Jia to say this; nobody would've sold them anyways. These things were equivalent to having extra lives; only idiots would sell them. Just like that, the slave soldiers all obtained 30 Life Potions, 2 Spirit, Endurance, and Magic Potions on their belts. This wholly supported large-scale, long period battles. But how much did this cost?

Fortunately, Suo Jia could create these himself, and didn't need to purchase them. Otherwise, he couldn't possibly get enough money. 3 million Life Potions was already worth millions! In addition, how long would that much last?

The current situation was that only high ranked adventurers or warriors had the qualifications to use Life Potions. A mere soldier wasn't provided for by the Empire. It could be said that only the Dawn Army was currently fitted with Life Potions and the other four colored potions. Of course, this was obvious; even if one searched the entire world, they wouldn't find anyone other than the Dawn Army in possession of these things.

Having considered the fact that the Thief Alliance's army would definitely not use righteous means, Suo Jia urged the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes to gather large amounts of magic crystals for all four elements, and spent day and night producing the potions. His magic power also increased at an abnormally fast speed. Enchanted Zhiyao was really just training in magic and spirit power. No matter what, using it more often meant that one would naturally

experience improvements. For example, lifting buckets of water every day meant that one's arm strength would naturally improve.

Finally, at the same time the Thief Alliance's army had begun to stir, the ordered 100,000 sets of equipment were shipped to Dawn. The over millions of arrows had also arrived, and had been distributed amongst the soldiers. The 70,000 official and unofficial archers spent all their time on training their spirit power or doing labor.

Although these 10 million refined arrows had a total value of a billion gold, they didn't really break. This actually made everyone's training processes progress faster, as they didn't have to worry about using up the arrows. They could endlessly and wildly continue shooting, so their one day of training was enough to compare to a typical archer's week long training. With this extremely intense and highly frequent training, everyone improved very quickly. Now, they were just waiting for the enemies to come.

Finally, news came in. The Thief Alliance seemed to have formed a collaboration with Oz City. They had gathered 300,000 soldiers, and prepared to encircle and annihilate Dawn City. This news completely stunned Suo Jia. He just couldn't understand the situation; did Dawn and Oz have any enmity between them? Why would they dispatch soldiers and attack?

Naifa Lian explained the reason for the situation. Actually, the person that had first slapped Suo Jia twice, but was then beaten until he was half-dead in return, Kaos, was the young master of Oz City. That meant Marquis Karuda, Kaos's father, was Oz City's

lord!

Chapter 216: Eventful Period (Part 2)

Back then, Suo Jia hadn't killed Kaos; he had just chased Kaos out of the city. However, he hadn't imagined that although Kaos had returned home alive, he had been beaten into idiocy. In a fit of rage, Marquis Karuda had gathered together with the Thief Alliance and dispatched 300,000 soldiers, working together to defeat Dawn City. They had also already come to an agreement to split the spoils of war.

Hearing this, Suo Jia could only smile bitterly. He hadn't imagined that Kaos would actually have such a powerful figure behind him. Oz was the largest city around here in terms of scale, and wasn't any smaller than Holy Light. It had a million soldiers that were beyond powerful. However, even if Suo Jia had known of this ages ago, he wouldn't have shrank back. If he couldn't overcome such a minor storm, how could he talk about the Greater Trade Routes?

Suo Jia shoved all this to the back of his head. Since they had already decided to make Suo Jia their enemy, Suo Jia definitely wouldn't run away. They wanted to fight? Then they should just go ahead. Right now...Suo Jia was just waiting for the Mengmas to finish evolving. By that point, people would learn to fear him!

The loud sound of footsteps broke the silence. The next moment....General Harvey rushed in with an excited expression. He hadn't even knocked the door before entering, and he shouted, "Viscount Suo Jia! The Velociraptors evolved!"

"What!" Suo Jia abruptly stood up in shock. 'Speak of the devil

and the devil will come, haha'...now that they had Velociraptor Riders, who would he possibly be afraid of?

Without another word, Suo Jia quickly followed General Harvey to the Knights camp. Sweeping a glance, he saw that a crowd of soldiers was currently surrounding a large Velociraptor with envious expressions. However, they knew that they would all have Velociraptors as well.

As he walked nearer, Suo Jia sighed in admiration at the powerful creature. It was 3 meters in height when standing on two legs. Its body was thick and solid, particularly its lower limbs, which were quite powerful. Sharp teeth poked out from within its large mouth. Nobody doubted that its teeth were strong enough to bite even rocks into pieces. When Suo Jia came by, he had personally witnessed this creature eating an obelisk as thick as a human and snap it in half right in the middle, sending the pieces of rock flying everywhere.

The Velociraptor's most important attack aside from its magic was its great mouth and its frontal claws, as well as its long and thick tail. Thus, it was extremely able in both physical and magical attacks, and its speed was also at an extreme level. Its sole weakness was in terms of defense; both its physical and magical defenses weren't strong at all.

Although the Rock Shield and Stone Skin it possessed boosted its defenses, these still weren't enough to make up for its weakness. At the very least, attacks were still able to break through. There were sure to be losses and injuries from the enemy ranks, and this wasn't something that Suo Jia was willing to watch happen.

A Mengma beast was worth around 40 million, so its evolved version, the Velociraptor, obviously had a much greater value. If one died, it'd would be a major loss. If he wanted to replace it? He'd have to first wait 50 years before even considering it.

After contemplating for a long time, Suo Jia finally came to a decision. He turned around to say to General Harvey, "I want you to immediately lead all the Velociraptor Riders, as well as a letter written by me, to Dwarf Canyon. When you're there, go look for Master Han Sa, and tell him to measure the Velociraptors so that he can make armors for them."

"Gasp!" Everyone sharply inhaled at Suo Jia's words. What kind of joke was he trying to pull? How much money would it cost to make armors for the Velociraptors? A breast plate, head armor, etc for each of the Velociraptors would cost an astronomical amount!

Seeing everyone's shocked expressions, Suo Jia proudly said, "Don't be surprised. I want to make up for the Velociraptors' sole weakness so that they can become the world's most powerful existences. Nobody would be able to defeat these types of super troops. Tell Han Sa that he needn't be afraid of spending money, I want the sturdiest armors possible!"

General Harvey's eyes lit up brilliantly and he said, "If you aren't afraid of the costs, then I recommend the armors' thickness to be ten times thicker than a typical human's armor. That way, regardless of what attack it is, the Velociraptor won't be afraid! Even forbidden magics would be useless!"

“Ten times!” Suo Jia’s jaw dropped in shock, “Isn’t that too overboard?! That would be 10 centimeters then! Can it still move in that? And even if it could, it would lose its speed!”

“Hehe...” General Harvey laughed and said, “If the thickness is only ten times more, the Velociraptor can definitely move it; it’s a dragon after all. Moreover, it has an affinity to earth. As long as its feet are on the ground, it can ignore any pressure and maintain its speed This is the Velociraptor’s strongest point. The only thing is...”

General Harvey looked at Suo Jia in embarrassment, “If the thickness is ten times, the production costs will also increase by ten times. 500 billion would be just the cost of the materials, and doesn’t even cover the actual manufacturing fee.”

Suo Jia waved a hand and said through clenched teeth, “As long as the Velociraptors can move in them, any thickness is fine. Money isn’t a problem. Anything is acceptable if the Velociraptor Knights can truly become unrivaled masters. I’m willing to spend any amount of money, so just manage the situation well!”

“If City Lord says that, then I’ll be at ease. If you give me a year, I’ll be able to bring back a troop that’s actually undefeatable for you to see!” General Harvey said excitedly.

“Mmm...” Suo Jia nodded and said, “Alright, there’s no time to lose. You guys should head out now. There’s no need to worry about the matter of money, I’ll directly send it over to you. Your task is to quickly familiarize yourselves with the Velociraptors, and become one with them. I don’t want you guys to be incompatible

with them!”

“Haha...” General Harvey shook his head as he laughed, “That won’t happen, Viscount Suo Jia. We’ve been together with these creatures since we were young, and our souls are closely linked. As long as we have a year to break into each other, we’ll definitely reach our peak states. This is something I can swear on.”

“Then it’s all good!” Suo Jia nodded in satisfaction as he stood up, “Ok, let’s stop the idle chat. It’s best if you go now before crowds start forming, otherwise, you won’t be able to leave even if you want to.”

General Harvey’s brows furrowed together, “But...if we leave now, what happens if Dawn cannot hold?”

From General Harvey’s expression of concern, Suo Jia could tell that they had already formed deep feelings for Dawn after being stationed here for 5-6 years. No matter what, even if they had to sacrifice their own lives, they definitely wouldn’t let Dawn fall!

Suo Jia said with a serious expression, “Don’t worry, just leave Dawn in my hands, General Harvey. I swear that as long I, Suo Jia, am present, Dawn will never fall. As long you guys quickly grow stronger, we will eventually become figures that will shake the whole world! Believe in me...”

General Harvey looked at Suo Jia with deep respect. He saluted fiercely, then abruptly turned around to shout, “Everyone, heed my command: equip yourselves now. Once the Velociraptors all

finish evolving, we will immediately head out!”

Following General Harvey’s orders, all the Velociraptor Knights began to move and store away their belongings. Meanwhile, Velociraptors finished evolving one after another. The process was just that simple; as long as they had enough crystals, their evolution speeds would all be the same. The time intervals would never even exceed 1 hour.

Time quickly flew by. Finally...three hours later, Dawn’s main gates opened. In a flash, 5000 figures leapt out like the wind. Soon after, the group effortlessly disappeared into the horizon.

Although the wind-elemental beasts had the fastest speeds, this was not an undeniable fact. No magical beast’s speed could be compared to the pace of an earth-elemental beast. When people said the wind-elemental beasts were faster, it was because wind-elemental beasts could fly up into the air without drag and gravitational forces. If they were on the ground where there were stronger pulling forces, as well as some complicated terrains, nothing could possibly beat the earth-type magical beasts. The Velociraptor, which was named for its speed, was a clear example.

Chapter 217: Roar Of Ice (Part 1)

In terms of speed, the Velociraptors were fastest on ground, and wind-elemental magical beasts were fastest in air. This may seem slightly outrageous, but if both went in water, would either the Velociraptor or the wind-elemental magical beast be able to run quickly? No, in the water, a water-elemental magical beast would be fastest! It was all the same reasoning.

Typically speaking, even if ground-type wind-elemental beasts didn't fly to attack, they would still jump high into the air. Their bodies would glide in mid-air, as they were fastest that way. The Velociraptor was different; as long as both its feet were on the ground, it would first enter a state that ignored the effects of gravity. This limitless boundary went up to a weight of a ton, so their armors just had to be less than that.

Under this anti-gravity state, the Velociraptors could do anything without restraint. Moreover, in an earth-elemental environment, they'd have endless energy. They could run while gathering power from the ground, so traveling thousands of kilometers in a day was nothing big. They could definitely do it without even running short of breath!

However, no matter how fast the Velociraptors were, they were still bound to the ground. They couldn't go fast to the point of flying. It's like how no matter how fast a car goes, it cannot be faster than a plane. If one didn't consider environments, the wind-elemental magical beasts were undoubtedly the fastest.

Giving one final glance at the disappearing Velociraptors, Suo Jia

abruptly turned around and shouted, “Immediately seal the doors. From now on, Dawn City will enter a war preparation state!”

Thousands of slave soldiers quickly lifted large rocks and forced them into the city gates’ gaps. They pressed the large stones together in a large pile, solidly blocking all the passages along the 30+ meter long city gates. It was now no different from the city walls.

Of course, it still looked like city gates from the outside. But if one wanted to push the gates open, it was impossible with just human strength. Smashing the city gates into pieces was possible, but after that, one would discover that the inside of the gates was filled with rocks!

Nearly 3 months had passed since the Dawn’s first military campaign. Within this period, the slave soldiers’ motivation to work had greatly increased. They worked overtime every day to make the city walls taller and sturdier. Now, the 100,000 slave soldiers had created a 10,000 meter long and 10 meter high wall. It was large and imposing, and seemed like a small mountain range if one looked at it from the distance!

In addition, after 3 months of training, the 10,000 regular slave soldier archers, as well as the 60,000 non-regular slave soldier archers, had mastered the bow and arrow to a new level. Their 3 months of hard labor had greatly boosted their arm strength, so the arrows they shot had more power behind them. Their penetrating abilities had also improved. With the addition of the massive amount of training as well, their accuracy had also exponentially increased.

This was quite a normal phenomenon. In the beginning, it is always extremely easy to achieve success. As long as one is willing to work hard, they will soon see results. But once they reach a certain point, their growth will slow down. At the moment, the slave soldiers hadn't reached this point yet.

Because the city gates had been blocked, the 5000 regular pike users didn't need to guard the gates anymore. Instead, they stayed in the army camp, waiting for any orders to leave. The reason they hadn't been dispatched to the battlefield was because Suo Jia was preparing them for critical fights; if any dangers occurred, they'd immediately rush out. With their formidable might, they'd be able to extinguish any dangers.

A week of waiting passed, but outside of Suo Jia's expectations, the battle that he thought would soon start hadn't yet begun. The Thief Alliance's army and Oz City's army only sealed off all the paths between Dawn and Holy Light Empire, but they hadn't surrounded Dawn.

After some contemplation, Suo Jia soon understood what was going on. Those stupid guys clearly wanted them to run out of food. However...their information was way too off. This place was a fort, the Empire's border station. They could use the reserves' 100,000 rations at any time. Each ration was worth two burlaps of food; if they ate conservatively, they could last an entire year without a problem.

Right now, food wasn't an issue. In terms of weapons, they had an endless supply of refined iron arrows, and also 40,000-50,000

sets of armor ready for replacements. They could completely maintain their place in a long war of attrition.

This was especially true now that Dawn's city walls were already 10 meters high. When they started battling, it would be equivalent to fighting while standing on top of a five story building. If the enemy wanted to reach the top of the walls, how great of a price would they have to pay? Dawn City now had 10,000 regular slave soldier archers, and 60,000 non-regular archers. 7 archers stood on every meter of the walls with their bows. With the addition of the swordsmen and pike users that now had crossbows, there was a total of 90,000 mid-range weapons. They could clearly arrange a line of death!

Every time they trained, Suo Jia would specially choose 1000 soldiers and make them responsible for picking up the refined iron arrows shot outside of the city. The loss of these arrows couldn't be afforded. One arrow was worth 100,000 gold, and dwarves could maintain them for 3 years. With this period, if the arrows were broken in any way, they would exchange the old arrows for new ones. Every arrow had a specific serial number, so not a single one could go missing.

How could a single arrow be worth 100,000 gold? Actually, forging a refined iron arrow took longer than making a refined iron blade. It required one to consider more of the balance aspects. In addition, the arrows had to be fixed specially so that they were aerodynamic, and had a stronger penetrating ability. Due to the fact that assembly line methods of production didn't exist in this world, each arrow had a long forging time. Just the manual labor costs was already an astronomical figure.

In addition, the material these arrows were made from was iron that had been refined hundreds of times. In order to increase their sturdiness so that they wouldn't break easily, precious materials had to be used. That's why among the trillion funds, at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of it was used on the materials.

The amount of money spent was proportional to the value of the goods. These refined iron arrows not only didn't break easily, their destructive and their penetrating abilities were greatly boosted. Compared to those light bamboo and wooden arrows, these refined iron arrows were multiple times more destructive. However, the refined iron arrows were only suitable for defense, and not for war of attack and defense on level ground. After all...the weight of the refined iron arrows was really a bit too excessive. Accurately hitting a target was too difficult.

But despite this drawback, these arrows were what Suo Jia most desired. Dropping a brick from atop the 10 meter high city walls could easily smash someone's skull. If they also shot a massive amount of arrows down, the inertia alone could cause them to pierce through armors, killing the enemies.

Since the enemies weren't attacking, Suo Jia was naturally happy and relaxed. After establishing the 1000 men group to pick up arrows, he established another 1000 men group for tending wounds. They were all older, somewhat weaker slave soldiers. Each of them had 3 belts on their waists that contained hundreds of Life Potions. Their task was to bring any heavily injured slave soldiers down from the wall and heal them with the Life Potions.

The fact that Suo Jia had considered this made the slave soldiers

extremely touched. In previous battles, the slave soldiers had always been fated to die after getting injured. There was no need for the enemy to kill them; for the sake of protecting secrets, their own army would give them the killing blow to end their lives.

But now, Suo Jia not only didn't do such a thing, he had also dispatched specific people to heal them. Although everyone understood that this didn't mean they could escape death, it already lowered their probability of dying to the least it could be. As long as they were cautious, they'd definitely survive this battle!

After considering their safety, the slave soldiers' drives to improve the city walls flared up even without Suo Jia commanding them to do so. They didn't think of it as doing it for someone else, but as protecting their own lives.

The wisdom of the masses exceeds that of any individual, and the more people there were, the more intelligence was gathered. Under the constant reflecting, studying, and polishing of the 100,000 slave soldiers, the peak of the thousands of meters long city walls had completely changed.

Since these slave soldiers weren't lacking in battle experience, they could survive through countless battles. Their familiarity with battle formations was probably not inferior to any regular soldier's. What was even rarer was that these slave soldiers all had unique skills, as they were all criminals from Holy Light. They were extremely cunning. Although they were regarded as the scum of society, they would make anyone's head hurt once they started scheming.

They had first set up a stone barrier on top of the city walls to block arrows. This basically made the task of the swordsmen unnecessary. However, that wasn't the end; because they were sure that Oz City would definitely have a large amount of archers that would shoot a rain of arrows over the walls, they had built another inclined shack on top of the arrow-blocking barrier. That way, unless the enemies' arrows could turn 180 degrees in midair, there was no way they could injure the soldiers on the walls.

Of course, they had also considered that the slave soldier archers on the walls may need to use rocks to smash their enemies in addition to shooting arrows, so they left openings to shoot from on the arrow-blocking barrier. The width of each opening was about the same as a swordsman's shield. Normally, they'd block the openings with their shields, and when they need to toss rocks down, they'd pull out the shields to do so. The results were quite good. Shooting arrows was the principle behind this method, only the arrows were replaced with rocks.

The Thief Alliance's army and Oz City's army still had the paths blockaded off as they had before, and insisted on not attacking. However, Dawn City was actually looking forward for them to do such a thing. The longer the duration of this blockade was, the more time they'd have to prepare. If it was dragged on for a year, the Velociraptor Knights would've returned by then, and the battle no longer needed to be fought. As long as a few pathways to the enemy's camps were opened up, the enemy would have to flee from the battle. But what else could the enemy do except flee when faced against such an overpowering army?

Chapter 218: Roar Of Ice (Part 2)

Although the great war was within sight, Dawn City was still flourishing. As expected, wars stimulated production. A large number of sinister schemes was forming on the city walls every day, and defensive measures became more and more perfect. For the sake of protecting their own lives, the 100,000 soldiers had really used up all of their brain power. Seeing the sinister arrangements, even Suo Jia secretly broke out in sweat. What was this? Wasn't it a bit too vicious...

Seeing that the slave soldiers were so energetic, Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes obviously couldn't fall behind. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes began a secret training that straightened out and improved their battle skills. Most importantly, they continued to endlessly train their battle qi so that their strength could increase in level. This was something that any warrior had to experience at some point.

Battle qi had to be slowly accumulated, like training one's inner strength. The accumulation process was gathering the qi, which naturally allowed the magic elements to drift away from the surroundings and gather within one's body to combine together with it. The battle qi amount would thus gradually increase. This was a passive, and extremely monotonous process. But if a warrior wanted to grow stronger, this was necessary.

Suo Jia had also entered a critical moment. For the past year or so, Suo Jia's magic power had increased to a frightening level with the help of meditation and the Enchanted Zhiyao. In terms of his magic power measurements, he had already reached the Great Mage level. However, he just couldn't break through another

mediation realm, and had been stuck on the normal Mage level this whole time.

With the slave soldiers' encouragement. Suo Jia's impatient mood finally calmed down. Before...he had always been in a rush to reach breakthrough points, and so his state of mind couldn't stay calm at all. However, after seeing the slave soldiers work so hard, Suo Jia suddenly realized that as long as he tried his best, he'd gain rewards. The only differences was the times these awards would be received, but that wasn't a big deal.

It was just like the diligent soldiers. Although they had arranged many plans, these were useless at the moment. But once the battle began, these plans wouldn't be wasted, and would actually be a major help.

If one put in effort, they'd definitely get something in return. The Heavens would never make anyone sacrifice something for no reason. With this mindset, Suo Jia finally settled his mood down, and concentrated his whole heart into training. Finally...after the third day of being submerged into training, Suo Jia naturally reached success, and in a spurt of energy, broke through the Mage realm, and became a Great Mage!

After reaching this level, both his spirit and magic powers substantially improved. In particular, the speed of their growth had increased by many times. Meditation went through similar developments. The effects of a Great Mage's meditation were much more plentiful than from a Mage's.

Not long before the wake of Dawn's second military campaign,

Suo Jia finally became an official Great Mage. The reason this rank was called Great Mage was because during this period, one would be able to grasp AOE magics for the first time!

Mages were experts proficient in magic. Great Mages were specifically skilled at AOE attack magics. This was the main difference. According to Suo Jia's current strength, he'd definitely be able to learn the next tier of magic.

Roar of Ice, shortened as Ice Roar, was a Great Mage's signature battle skill. With a 10 meter circumference, a sharp ice blade would burst out, forming a destruction zone. Any enemies within this perimeter would be indiscriminately attacked. At the same time the enemies were attacked, the ice blades could smash the enemies into pieces and scatter them into the wind.

Suo Jia didn't need to learn the Ice Roar's spell formation. He had long since memorized it, and had even drawn it mentally many times. Although he hadn't yet activated it, he was already extremely familiar with it.

Suo Jia took a deep breath and slowly stretched out his right hand. A bright blue line of light appeared from the hollow of his palm and quickly drew out a complicated and abnormal magic spell formation. It completed in an instant, and the next moment....a world-shaking Ice Roar was activated!

"Whoosh..." Shrieking loudly, the endless ice blades whizzed towards the surroundings, whipping up a large storm. It was just like a cyclone; it had incomparable destructive power, and fiercely spun in the air. This then whirled around violently to form a storm

of thousands of ice blades that then spiralled outwards.

“Clang! Clang! Clang...” A series of clanging sounds rang out. The ice blades all glittered as they fiercely broke their way through the surrounding walls; they wouldn't stop until they were at least 4 centimeters deep. Only half of the ice blade remained visible on the outside.

Suo Jia sighed in praise as he walked over to the wall. Seeing the crescent-shaped ice blade, Suo Jia was beyond ecstatic. With this Ice Roar, Suo Jia would finally be useful in combat. A Great Mage's role in a battle was at an extremely destructive level!

Ice Roar's attack area was anything within a 10 meters circumference. The methods of attack were Ice Revolving Slice and Freezing Invasion. Once one was hit by Ice Roar, they'd suffer from the consecutive attacks of thousands of ice blades, and be frozen by the Ice Roar's chilly air at the same time!

The might of ice-type magic would induce a headache for anyone. To an average person, the waters arts was the most difficult to deal with out of the four elemental arts. Once faced against a water mage, their actions would be slowed down due to freezing effects, and their attacks would also slowly lose power. One might even feel that their senses numbed because of the freezing, as the brain seemed to suffer from the cold as well.

Moreover, freezing wasn't the only issue. While being frozen, one had to face powerful attacks as well. In terms of magical attacks, the water arts and fire arts were better than the wind arts and the earth arts.

Although fire mages were explosive and destructive in their attacks, they were also extremely straightforward. If they could win, then they'd win, if they couldn't, they wouldn't. It was painfully clear-cut.

However, the water arts were different. Just because they had a chance of winning didn't mean that they would. As for possibly losing, that was a chance that couldn't be bet on either. The ice arts were too abnormal, too hard to deal with. The attack power didn't seem to have a limit, and was also accompanied by freezing effects. If one wanted to fight with an ice mage in close combat, they'd have quite some difficulty moving. Under the freezing effects, one would start moving at a turtle's pace. The ice magic that was originally at turtle's pace would then, in contrast, seem as fast as a rabbit.

Putting aside how troublesome the ice arts were to deal with, Suo Jia's killing powers were now comparable to 100 elite soldiers combined. This was the power of a mage.

In reality, 1000 Great Mages of any element were enough to protect these 10,000 meters of walls. No matter how many enemies came, they couldn't possibly step forward even one step. However....gathering 1000 Great Mages was only a dream. Aside from the imperial family, nobody else had this ability. Moreover, this was only because the typical person wasn't willing to make the imperial family their enemy, so they couldn't possibly refuse!

After breaking through, Suo Jia didn't continue training the Ice Roar. He had already trained it many times during the process.

Now, time was precious, as the great war was about to start. His sole responsibility was using Zhiyao to produce large amounts of the four colored potions. This was his most important task.

While Suo Jia was absorbed in the Zhiyao process, news came in from the outside. Not long ago, Aimi and Aila had been pushed back to Holy Light City by Suo Jia, where they had entered closed door training. Now, after hearing about Dawn's impending great war, they had rushed back!

Suo Jia was stunned at the news, but soon stood up abruptly and walked out with a fierce expression on his face. Those dumb girls, why had they run here for no good reason? Didn't they know that it was dangerous here?

Suo Jia walked out to the city lord's main residence. The next moment, two giant Wind Dragons appeared in front of him. Aimi and Aila were currently standing next to the Wind Dragons, their eyes twinkling with joy as they stared unblinkingly at Suo Jia.

Suo Jia nodded in sudden understanding. He had been wondering just now how the two girls had managed to break through the defensive line, but now he realized that it was because they had been sent here by Holy Light's Wind Dragon Knights.

Suo Jia shot an envious look at the two Wind Dragon Knights. Although Holy Light only had 30 of them, they were undoubtedly an extremely overpowering power that wasn't any inferior to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. However, they had a weakness; once the owner died, the Wind Dragons would not gain another. Moreover, in terms of strength, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes

currently weren't on par with the Wind Dragons, but they had far surpassed the Knights.

Chapter 219: The Soldiers' Arrival At The City Walls (Part 1)

After respectfully greeting Suo Jia, one of the Wind Dragon Knights said, "Viscount Suo Jia, Duke Wen Sha wanted us to pass on this message: If you need it, he is willing to provide assistance at any time, whether it's money, weapons, or military power, none of it is a problem. Duke Wen Sha also said that if you needed it, he could dispatch an army and pincer attack from behind!"

"That..." Suo Jia was obviously moved by this. However, he also knew that nothing was that cheap in this world. Once he agreed to this, it'd be equivalent to boarding Wen Sha's ship, like two ants stuck on the same string of fate. In addition, Dawn's future matters would be controlled by him, making it impossible for Suo Jia to initiate anything. This was something that Suo Jia refused to see happen.

In addition, Suo Jia had already placed his stakes on the Emperor; he couldn't possibly place them on another person. Suo Jia knew that Duke Wen Sha was on the Fourth Prince's side, and he was Wen Ya's husband! Even if Suo Jia wanted to plead for help, he'd ask the old man Emperor. A single sentence would be enough for the Emperor to lend him 10,000 men, why would he need Wen Sha's help?

This battle was just training to Suo Jia. His objective hadn't ever changed; it was still the Greater Trade Routes. That's why...no matter what battle he had to face, he definitely wouldn't shrink back. Furthermore, he wouldn't ever use another person for his own ends. Even if someone else wanted to take partake in this

amazing chance to train, it would depend on whether he was willing to let them or not.

Suo Jia tactfully rejected Duke Wen Sha's good will. Hearing this, the two Knights didn't speak any further. After respectfully bidding him farewell, they jumped onto the backs of their Wind Dragons. With a flash of golden light, the two Wind Dragons flew up into the air and quickly flew towards Holy Light.

As he watched the Wind Dragon Knights slowly disappear into the horizon, Suo Jia had a nagging feeling that something was off, as if he had forgotten something. But even after thinking about it for a long time, he still couldn't recall it. Thus, he could only helplessly shake his head; if he couldn't remember it, he wouldn't try to ponder it any further for now.

Aimi and Aila walked up to Suo Jia in high spirits. Each of them grabbed one of his hands, and they intimately pulled him around. It had been ages since they had last seen him. They had really missed him to the point of feeling misery. Throughout their lives, Suo Jia was the one that had known them for the longest time, and had the most mutual feelings with them. They hadn't realized this when they were together, but once they had separated, they had suddenly realized that they missed Suo Jia very much. Even looking at him, or following behind him, made them feel happy and satisfied.

When Suo Jia looked left and right at the two girls hugging him, a bang resounded in his mind as he suddenly realized why he had felt the previous situation strange, as if he had forgotten something. It was...the fact that these two girls were still here, but

the Wind Dragon Knights had already left! They were supposed to have gone back with the Knights!

Suo Jia opened his mouth in preparation to chide them. However, he begrudgingly closed his mouth in the end. When he saw the happy expressions on their faces, he couldn't bear to scold them. For some reason, the older he got, the more difficult it became to criticize the beautiful girls. This was especially true when they weren't really wrong in the first place.

Suo Jia helplessly shook his head. He knew that with these girls' levels of strength, staying behind wouldn't prove to be that dangerous anyways. At the very least, if they were under the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' protection, they could rush out and definitely stay alive without a problem.

They weren't really afraid of enemies...although they weren't wearing Epic ranked equipments, their completely linked Legendary ranked equipments weren't any inferior to an Epic ranked equipment set.

Although they weren't as overwhelmingly powerful as the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were, to the point where they could completely ignore enemy attacks, their fully linked Legendary ranked equipment sets made them fearless of attacks. As long as the attacks they faced weren't too powerful, there was no chance the enemy could instantly break through their defenses.

Suo Jia nodded. Actually, it was right for them to have come. This was a great training opportunity. The real pity would be if this opportunity was missed. Aimi's Freezing Rain and Aila's

Endless Ice Arrows were all deadly AOE attacks. However...these two great magics were products of their equipments, not actually from their own strengths. This was the overwhelming power of Legendary ranked equipments.

In terms of dominance, both the Freezing Rain and the Endless Ice Arrows were absolutely not inferior to Suo Jia's Ice Roar. However, their magic activations were reliant on their equipments, while Suo Jia's magic was personally activated. This was the greatest difference between them, as well as the gap between Legendary ranked and Epic ranked equipments.

On another side, the Velociraptor Knights group had finally reached Dwarf Canyon. When they saw the stooped, thatched cottages within the valley, General Harvey was just about to dispatch people to go and send a message. But just then, a dwarf with a huge beard rushed out from the village and walked over, shouting loudly, "You guys came so quickly! I just got Young Master Suo Jia's letter this morning, and you managed to arrive that same afternoon. Haha...come in, come in!"

Harvey couldn't help but shake his head in admiration. The Young Master was indeed efficient in taking care of major matters. Even though Dawn was so busy at the moment, Suo Jia had still arranged everything clearly and orderly, without a single thing missing. How could such an ability appear inside a 13 year old child?

General Harvey led his 5000 Velociraptor Knights to quickly enter the Dwarf Canyon. During the next few days, dozens of dwarf forging masters were constantly surrounding the

Velociraptors to measure and calculate something or another. When one looked over, they'd see that these old fellows were all holding some kind of notebook in their hands, recording every single detail. This kind of serious attitude really made the Knights feel deep veneration for the dwarves!

Master Han Sa crossed his arms and looked at General Harvey, "At the moment, we've already completed all measurements. According to Young Master Suo Jia's orders, we'll have to familiarize ourselves with the Velociraptors' individual traits. We should be able to deliver the goods in three months!"

"Ah! So fast!" General Harvey cried out in astonishment.

"Hehe..." Han Sa laughed in embarrassment, "Of course. This is a task from Young Master Suo Jia, after all. How could we possibly dare to tarry? Ever since last time when he bought all our stock of refined iron arrows that we had accumulated the past hundred years in one go, he had already become the most welcomed customer here among the dwarves. We will always put satisfying any of his requests as our priority; everyone else is pushed back!"

Han Sa paused for a moment before continuing, "During the next 3 months, all of us dwarves will try our best to keep forging. In a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 3 months, the 5000 Velociraptor armors will definitely be completed!"

"But..." General Harvey furrowed his brows and said in concern, "Such a short amount of time wouldn't be enough to even design the armors. How could you possibly produce excellent armors? Isn't it too rushed?"

“Haha...” Master Han Sa shook his head, then proudly patted his chest and said, “Don’t worry about that. This is our profession, there’s no way we’d go wrong!”

Seeing that General Harvey still had an unconvinced expression on his face, Han Sa begrudgingly added, “I admit that we can’t possibly create the perfect armor in only 3 months. Just forging them all will already be quite difficult. However, all products created by us dwarves have guaranteed quality. This is something that we will never let go.”

“But...” General Harvey frowned with worry, “If you can’t create the best and most suitable armors, aren’t we wasting our money?”

“Wrong!” Firmly locking eyes with Harvey, Han Sa replied, “We dwarves have never accepted money with guilty consciences. What you guys need now are armors that you can quickly use, then familiarize yourselves with the armors’ traits. We are thus handling this request just as you have asked it.”

Han Sa continued, “With a thickness of 10 centimeters, defensive power isn’t a problem. This is basically just a lump of metal. As long as the materials are appropriate, nobody can possibly break through these armors. Even Saint Warriors wouldn’t be able to do it. The only thing that needs to be taken note of is that rationality of the composition.”

“Mm...” General Harvey nodded furiously, “It’s exactly as you say. An armor 10 centimeters thick is definitely sturdy enough; as

long as the materials are sufficiently strong, nobody can break through. But...the armors' compositions are too important. Carelessly putting them together will definitely lead to some flaws."

Han Sa patted General Harvey on the shoulder and smiled, "Don't worry. We won't just take this money in exchange for nothing. If you want to create a perfect armor, you'd have to give us at least a year's time. Asking us to create an unprecedented, perfect armor for another creature to use would require you to give us 3 years of time. But do you guys have that long?"

"That..." Harvey remained silent. He knew that they indeed didn't have that kind of time; three years from now, it'd be way too late.

Seeing Harvey go silent, Han Sa firmly stated, "That's why, we will follow your circumstances to modify the armors for as long as necessary to make them complete. Just relax, we won't stop until these armors reach their states of completion. This is a responsibility that we dwarves have to maintain our reputations!"

Chapter 220: The Soldiers' Arrival At The City Walls (Part 2)

Putting aside how the Velociraptor Knights were training, as well as how the dwarf smiths were forging the armors, Dawn City was currently raging with energy. The great war was within sight, and the city walls could no longer increase in height. However, that didn't mean the slave soldiers were just idling around; they continued to pile stones the size of their head next to the walls. Judging by their current piled amount, even if they tossed stones for a month, they couldn't possibly use up all the stones there.

As they were still very listless, the slave soldiers came up with new ideas. They opened some slanting pathways on the arrow barrier part of the wall, and placed a long wooden channels that reached the bottom. As long as a head-sized rock was thrown out this opening, it'd naturally slant downwards along the channel. Then, it'd rebound off the bottom end of it and fly out to smash at the enemies below the walls.

The rocks' destinations could also be modified according to the lengths of the wooden channels outside the walls. After a few tests, they confirmed that the longer the wooden channels stretched, the further the stones would fall. Likewise, the shorter the channels were, the closer the rocks would fall.

As for the entry point for the rock projectiles, it was slanted at a 45 degree angle. Outside attacks would never be able to shoot through this opening and injure the soldiers. Thus, the slave soldiers could just hide behind the wall and endlessly toss rocks out to kill the enemies without being injured. It was both easy and

satisfying.

The slave soldiers also decided that they might as well construct a stone passage along the top of the walls. It was made up of only rock, with a stone roof and walls. Even the passageway to the bottom of the walls was created with rock. This stretched all the way up to the pile of stone projectiles.

Of course, for the sake of preventing people from getting shot by arrows, the pile of stone projectiles had a large, wooden shack erected above it. That way, long-ranged attacks would basically be unable to hit anyone. Although Dawn couldn't claim being invulnerable to all attacks, Suo Jia still hadn't come up with any possible way to break through its defenses.

Also, the spaces the arrows were shot through had also been shrunk by quite a bit. Now, the openings were only about the size of a person's face. Although this affected the arrows' levels of accuracy, the battlefield fortunately didn't really require singular attack accuracy. Rather, it only needed an AOE attack within a certain precision. As long as the soldiers followed the battlefield's flow and General Jason's commands, they'd definitely be able to pull off a successful AOE attack.

In order to maintain the archers' safeties, these openings were covered with wire nettings. Only a small hole for shooting was left. Random arrows making it through was nearly impossible. This was basically a one-sided defensive net that even thin arrows couldn't possibly pass through.

People are afraid of resting, because once they rest, their

thoughts tend to wander. This is especially true when one's life is involved; people can think of any methods for the sake of keeping their own lives. Seeing the war devices added onto the city walls one after another, Suo Jia couldn't help but admit that these people's creativities were too frightening. The combination of 100,000 minds was really very powerful, and could be even described as 'endless horror'.

Of course, this was also related to Suo Jia's policies. Seeing how active everyone was, Suo Jia immediately ordered that anyone that made a suggestion that was later adopted would receive 10,000 gold. According to the degree of the suggestion, it could be calculated as a meritorious contribution. Once one had made enough contributions, they could exchange them for a noble rank. Of course...this noble rank was only within Dawn City; Holy Light Empire didn't accept them.

As time passed by, the slave soldiers slowly lost their fear of war. Now, they all desired for the war to break out. Every day, they cursed and ranted about how those damn bastards still hadn't come!

Seeing everyone so excited about the war, Suo Jia knew that he had to find some way to drain some of their energy. Otherwise, they might end up fighting amongst each other from impatience.

Suo Jia ordered General Jason to start an unlimited exercise for real combat. The other trainings each day were all cancelled and replaced by this exercise. Every morning, afternoon, and evening in 3 hours, thousands of refined iron arrows were shot out from the top of the city walls. They fell one after another onto various

targets placed in different locations around the perimeter. In order to conserve the arrows and make them easier to retrieve, the targets were all made with sand. Thus, the standard was reached if they hit a sand trap.

In order to satisfy the demands of the exercise, sand pits filled a diameter of 10 meters within the 300 meter perimeter around the city. All the sand pits were adjacent to each other, and they each had individual ID numbers. With General Jason's command, all the arrows would be simultaneously shot out towards a single sand pit in a condensed attack. In a mere instant, thousands of refined arrows would change the sand pit into an arrow pit.

General Jason had also split the 300 meter area into 30 parts, each part 10 meters. If he gave a command, the rain of arrows would definitely land in a specific area accurately. Currently, this bit of accuracy was still present.

Why did the firing range suddenly increase? It was originally 200 meters, but it had become 300 meters. Actually...this wasn't strange at all. Firstly, everyone's arm strengths had increased, so their shooting ranges had increased as well. Secondly...the height of the city walls was now 10 meters, so the shooting range naturally grew.

After training non-stop for a month...the enemies that they had been waiting forever for had finally arrived. Just like before, a large army that hid the sky and covered the earth came charging over from the horizon. Facing the distant army, the soldiers all remained calm. They slowly retrieved all their refined iron arrows from the sand pits, and climbed up the tall, 75 degree angled city

walls. At the same time, the enemy army finally appeared around 1000 meters away.

Seeing the enemy army at its peak outside the city, the slave soldiers became both nervous and excited. Nervous because it was hard to avoid deaths from occurring in war, excited because they had prepared for so long. The numerous plans that Dawn had come up with would finally show their might.

In addition, everyone was filled with confidence in their own strengths after training for so long. It wasn't just because of everyone's strengths, but more importantly, because of their great general and expert in defense: Jason! They also had an overpowering master, the rich and able viscount: Suo Jia!

Everyone knew that money wasn't omnipotent. However, money and strength in addition to perfect leading and tactical stratagems formed a matchless foundation. How could one fight a battle without any money; fights were fought precisely over money!

Karuda was seated on his warhorse outside the city, looking at the imposing city walls in the distance. For a moment, Karuda's face remained frozen with a bitter expression; he just hadn't imagined that in only a year, the place would've changed to such an extent. He remembered that during the last time he had visited, the city walls were only 2 meters tall, and a single push could cause them to collapse. But now? If he wanted to push the city walls down now, he might as well go push at the large mountain nearby. At the very least, there wouldn't be anyone sniping at him there.

However, Karuda was extremely confident in the war. He had

brought 200,000 men this time, but that had required him to use up a large majority of his accumulated assets. This was the symbol of his wealth and power. Only with the power of the 200,000 soldiers was he able to shake the border with his power and look down on everyone.

Although to any outside person, Karuda seemed to have a million soldiers, the only elite masters that were fully equipped only numbered 200,000. If he wanted to equip all of them and train them into elites, Karuda would have to use 5x more of his wealth, and another 5x more of his time.

But really, just the 200,000 men had already used up 40 years of training and equipments. It could be said that in the end, it was his strongest force. He had never believed that he'd be defeated; no matter how tall the walls he faced were, it wouldn't be an exception!

Next to Karuda stood a tall and upright, masked person wearing a green cloak. Looking closer, one could see that this guy's figure exceptionally robust. Although it didn't appear to be very thick and solid, it gave others a sharp and penetrating feeling. He had 3 strangely modelled daggers, and any bright person would be able to tell that this guy was a super powerful warrior!

That's right. In reality, he was the leader of the Alliance formed by 180 thief groups. This time, he had sent out 100,000 elite thieves; only victory was allowed. This was already all the ordinary members among the 180 thief group alliance. If they were defeated again, they would be losing all hope.

A gale swept through. Karuda turned his head to the side to look at the Thief Alliance leader and said, “Typically speaking, we’d only be able to stably overturn them if our attack force are at least twofold of their defensive forces. However, the current sum of our entire forces has already surpassed theirs by threefold, reaching 300,000. That’s why, our victory in this war is guaranteed!”

Chapter 221: Main Force Dispatched (Part 1)

Dangerously narrowing his eyes, the Alliance leader said, “I also don’t think we’ll lose. However...it’s still best if we remain on our guards. The force of their archers is very powerful, and they are very skilled at controlling their arrows. We must not, under any circumstances, be careless. Otherwise, we’ll be stuck in an irreversible situation that we will surely regret!”

Karuda nodded in agreement and laughed, “Once we reach the battlefield, there is no way I’d ever be careless. These soldiers are all men that I’ve trained very carefully for many years. If it is possible, I don’t want to lose a single one of them!”

“However...” Karuda narrowed his eyes and glanced at Dawn’s city walls. He said in an overcast tone, “At the moment, even though we aren’t attacking, we have to start. Give us the responsibility of charging at the bottom of the walls, while your Thief Alliance’s soldiers should use their speed to rush to the top of the walls!”

“Ok...” The Alliance leader nodded in agreement, “That’s not a problem. All you need to do is successfully escort us thieves to the bottom of the walls, and then you can leave everything else to us. With this level of steepness, we’ll just charge straight up.”

Karuda nodded in satisfaction, then waved his hand as he loudly commanded, “Armored chariot soldiers in the front, swordsmen in the back, advance! Make sure to watch out for the enemy’s rain of arrows!”

Following Karuda's orders, 10,000 armored chariot soldiers carefully pushed the large wooden chariots slowly forwards. Behind them were 20,000 swordsmen with their shields lifted high and war blades in hand. Like a wave, they charged forward towards Dawn City's walls.

Originally, they had ladders that were going to be used for besieging the city. However...Dawn's city walls were just too tall. How could a ladder possibly reach the top of a wall that was over 10 meters high? It would only be able to reach halfway, which would be completely useless.

Seeing the army gradually approach closer to Dawn, Karuda suddenly put his hand up. Two large, wooden chariots began to move closer to the gates. These chariots were around 5 meters long and 2 meters tall; these were attacking vehicles that Karuda specially designed to attack the city gates!

On another side of the walls, Suo Jia and General Jason exchanged smiles as they watched the slowly advancing armored chariots and the swordsmen behind them. Although this pattern was extremely dependable and troublesome for the enemy with regards to this impending war, it was useless in face of Dawn's army.

Just like that, the two of them let the armored chariots and the swordsmen reach the city walls; during the whole journey, they hadn't once encountered any obstacles. It was as if they were smoothly strolling down a wide street. All the soldiers found this extremely strange; wasn't this a war? How come nobody was stopping them? Could it be...that the enemy was absolutely

helpless? Even if they weren't able to do anything, they had to at least pretend to attack, right?

“Kacha...kacha...kacha...” Just as everyone, including Karuda and the Alliance leader, were currently standing there in confusion, a sound came from the top of Dawn's city walls. Long, slanting planks slid out from the roof of the walls. These stretched out for more than 2 meters from the walls before stopping.

Within Dawn's city walls, the soldiers were quickly bustling about. They all gathered enough tree oils to spread on head-sized rocks. These were their secret weapons against the armored chariots.

General Jason narrowed his eyes at the enemy, who had already reached the attack zone. He raised his right hand imposingly and roared, “Light up the Torch Rocks...and attack!”

The messenger soldiers corps, which had now expanded to 100 members, immediately blew their iron horns and wildly shouted. In the next instant, all the city walls lit up with fire's blaze and a thick smoke began to pervade the air. The oiled Torch Rocks were gradually ignited, one after another, and they were thrown out of the openings in front of the walls.

After going through the opening, each Torch Rock would quickly roll down along one of the long channels. After increasing in speed for around 3-4 meters, they would suddenly be flung off the plank. They would float in the air for a period of time, before landing on the ground with a bang.

If it was training just like before, that would be the only result. However, it was different now; this was definitely not a training, but a war. At the moment...the ground beneath the walls wasn't empty, it was filled with people. 30,000 enemy soldiers were currently standing in the path of the Torch Rocks.

After hundreds of practices, the landing points of the Torch Rocks had already been calculated carefully. The accuracy of these falling rocks was already within the nearest meter. Enemy soldiers also just happened to be standing right at this specific point. In only a moment, the entire battlefield's arrangement had drastically changed.

Originally...if they were just ordinary rocks, then perhaps there was nothing to worry about. After all...there were armored chariots. However...these rocks were dripping with thick tree oils; after the rocks collided with the chariots, the oils would stick to them and fiercely begin to burn. In an instant, the armored chariots were all set on fire.

A single wave of attacks had instantly submerged the thousands of chariots into a sea of flames. As they were roasted by the raging flames, the soldiers in the armored chariots and the swordsmen obviously didn't remain still; they hurriedly retreated in a sorry state, trying to avoid being burnt to crisp by the great fire.

At that moment, a second batch of Torch Rocks came tumbling down from the top of the walls. Under such a powerful force, the enemy had no choice but to retreat further and further. The line before the city walls had become an ocean of flames. Anyone that

got too close was severely burned, so they couldn't do anything but move back.

While the enemy was panicking and starting to have doubts, the 10,000 regular slave soldier archers all aimed their bows at the enemy soldiers that had already retreated into the distance. These guys had their backs exposed, they only cared about evading the flames and they had completely forgotten about the archers on the wall. Thus, they had absolutely no defense when they exposed their backs to all the archers.

“Fire!” Following General Jason's roar, a glittering rain of arrows whistled through the air and ached down towards the scattering enemy soldiers. The powerful ear-piercing sounds vaporized the enemy's courage. This was definitely not a sound that an ordinary arrow could possibly make!

People had actually tried dropping a refined iron arrow from the walls before. Without exerting any force, the heavy refined iron arrow would bury itself deep into the ground upon landing. This represented the gravitational pull on it in addition to its mighty speed. It could be said that these arrows shot from above would have a greater destructive power.

At that moment, these 10,000 refined iron arrows, that were half a meter long and finger-thick, carried the force from the bowstrings. In addition to the acceleration from dropping down from such heights, the amount of damage it could inflict when it landed was something that no ordinary person would ever be able to imagine. Hard leather armors would obviously be pierced through easily, and light metal armors wouldn't be spared either.

Outside the city, 400,000 soldiers watched a bright rain of arrows cross the skies. The armored chariot soldiers that had retreated the furthest, as well as some of the swordsmen, were instantly knocked down by the arrows. Pitiful howls, cries, and ear-splitting screams filled the air.

It had only been the first round of attack, but the armored chariot soldiers had pretty much all been injured. A small portion of the swordsmen had also been shot to death on the spot. Fortunately, a human's instincts kick in when they are in a moment of panic. All the swordsmen immediately turned around and raised their shields. After their bodies were safely behind the large shields, they knelt to the ground in fear, their bodies were shaking violently as they stared at their companions in shock. However, none of them dared to reach out to help each other; who knew when another rain of arrows would come pouring down!

Up until now, Dawn's army had attacked in three waves total: the first wave of attack destroyed the armored chariots, the second wave of attack forced the enemy to retreat, and the third wave of attack directly injured thousands of enemy soldiers. What could the fourth wave possibly be?

In the opinions of Karuda and the Alliance leader, the first wave of attack was a loss due to their stupidity. But generally speaking, the first wave had already completely stopped. Any further attacks would be meaningless; swordsmen that had successfully raised their shields weren't figures that arrows shot from a long distance would be able to pierce. How could it be called a shield if it couldn't even block an arrow?

Of course, the two leaders had considered the possibility of Dawn City dispatching soldiers to pursue their party. However...this idea was instantly overruled. If Dawn City was really willing to fight outside the city, it would be a beyond hilarious event. Something that beneficial to the enemy was something they wouldn't be able to obtain, even if they begged. It could be said for certain that if Dawn's army was willing to come out, they definitely wouldn't survive!

Despite seeing the miserable state of the first line, Karuda wasn't discouraged. Wars were just like that; soldiers that always won didn't exist. As long as the military campaign hadn't ended, there was still a possibility of reversing the situation. They could get a second chance for everything that had happened. What they needed to do now was to gather the scattered swordsmen, and then organize a second wave of attack.

While Karuda was contemplating this, 36 red figures suddenly appeared on the city walls. The most eye-catching part was the gold diagrams on their red cloaks. Who were they? Why were they on the city walls?

Chapter 222: Main Force Dispatched (Part 2)

“Hahahaha....” While everyone else was silently trying to guess these people’s identities, a clear and bright laugh rang out. A blue figure abruptly leapt off the top of the city gates. After a few steps in mid-air, the figure appeared lightning-fast on the top of the structure.

As the figure looked at the distant Karuda and Alliance leader, its clear voice shouted again, “Hey! What kind of place did you guys think Dawn was? Did you think that you could just come and go however you pleased? Such an easy situation doesn’t exist here!”

The blue figure waved his hand and roared, “Charge! Teach a severe lesson to these brazen guys that dare to disobey authority! Don’t bother trying to leave me any face, just go out and kill them all!”

Following the blue person’s actions, the 36 red and gold figures spread out along the walls suddenly leapt into the air, emitting a red gold glow as they charged towards the nearby swordsmen. At the same time, the blue figure also suddenly strode forwards, leaping up with a strange posture, like an agile fish swimming about. Like this, the blue figure instantly shot downwards towards the bottom of the city walls.

Outside the city gates stood Naifa Lian, who was anxiously wringing her hands. Her palms had unconsciously become sweaty. That’s right....surely no further explanation is needed; the identities of the blue person and the red gold figures are quite

obvious. These were the objects of Naifa Lian's concern.

Although Naifa Lian knew how formidable Suo Jia's abilities were, what kind of place was this? This wasn't a playground nor an arena; this was a battlefield. An individual's strength on a battlefield was extremely insignificant. No matter how powerful a person was, they could still be cut down here. That was not at all an uncommon occurrence.

Originally, Naifa Lian had been extremely curious about Suo Jia, about how he could seize the championship of the King of Kings Tournament at a mere age of 8. However...she had never once come into contact with Suo Jia back then. Because she was a reserved girl, she had never allowed herself to take the initiative to approach Suo Jia first.

The next time she had met Suo Jia had been from the standpoint as enemies. Logically speaking, Naifa Lian should've hated Suo Jia. But in reality, she couldn't muster up any enmity towards him.

Suo Jia taking over this place was the Emperor's orders. It was her father that had brought about all the later events because he had deliberately made things difficult. Moreover...Suo Jia had already let her whole family live on her behalf. Because of this, Naifa Lian felt that she shouldn't hate him; moreover, she was supposed to feel touched, and try to return the favor.

Ever since Suo Jia had taken over Dawn, the entire city had gone through a series of changes. The 100,000 slave soldiers' motivations had been fired up, and in only a few months, they had constructed such imposing city walls. In addition, their unity and

usage of teamwork to attack the enemy was something that was previously unimaginable.

Truthfully speaking, Naifa Lian had already started to worship Suo Jia. Someone like him that could successfully accomplish major events was obviously not ordinary. Dawn's first battle wasn't only a major accomplishment, but it could even be called a miracle. In a faceoff between 100,000 vs 100,000, Dawn hadn't lost a single person. This had never happened in history before; if it wasn't a miracle, then what else could it be?

Now, the second war had started. Although nobody knew the future, the first contact between the two sides had led to the extermination of the enemy's most threatening armored chariots. Neither the riders nor the vehicles had been able to escape.

This wasn't the end yet; Suo Jia still wasn't satisfied. He swore to make it so that the enemy wouldn't be able to come or leave. Even if they did manage to leave, they had to be forced to pay a bitter price. Letting them just run away was definitely unacceptable.

Naifa Lian knew that Suo Jia was doing this in order to boost everyone's morales and arouse their blood. This would increase their confidence in an absolute victory. It was the only way to persevere through a long battle; otherwise, a heavy battle of defense would easily make everyone twitchy.

The 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had already descended from the air. They wildly brandished the war blades in their hands, blasting out attacks with all their energy. As their explosive fire wind battle qi burst outwards, they generated fierce, deafening

booms.

One had to admit that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had gone berserk. Perhaps they wouldn't have been able to display such aggressiveness against experts, but against these slightly above average people with limited power, they were like living War Deities!

These war blades that danced around in the air were over 2 meters long, they were even longer than a person's body. Whenever they hit a shield, they'd break the shield; when they made contact with a human, they'd slice through them. The blades flashed coldly and fresh blood spurted outwards into the air. The 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were like 36 lionesses that had just charged into a pack of goats. They destroyed as much as they liked and none could rival them! The long blades swung unhindered through the area, never encountering any obstacles. Anything that tried to stand in their way were sliced into halves; both human and shield alike. Nothing could escape this fate.

In the blink of an eye, 300-400 swordsmen had been laid to eternal rest. Blood covered the ground, making it all muddy. The unaffected Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes leapt up like gales, and the death reaper's scythe began its dance!

Just as the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were about to raise their blades a second time, Suo Jia finally arrived with the pale blue Water God's Shield enshrouding his body. Suo Jia leisurely strode into the crowd of swordsmen, as if he was just taking a casual walk outside. He was so calm and comfortable.

Everyone knew that the swordsmen's formation was extremely tight; the people were right next to each other. If they weren't arranged like that, they couldn't possibly line up to form a barricade of shields, and be an effective defense. Once a crack appeared in the formation, the rain of arrows had to enter through the small chink in order to injure the people behind the shields.

Originally, this densely packed line of swordsmen were absolute experts in defense. Aside from people like the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, who directly chopped both shield and person in half, it was extremely hard to approach these soldiers and harm them. After all...a wall of shields wasn't that easy to break through,

However, Suo Jia believed that these guys carrying large shields and war blades were just humanoid targets. Killing them was as easy as slicing vegetables.

Suo Jia finally descended from the air onto the central area of the shield formation. Seeing Suo Jia appear next to them, the surrounding swordsmen quickly brandished their war blades, their hacks and slashes showering down towards Suo Jia.

Suo Jia smirked in disdain as he stomped one foot down. The Diamond Charge that he had prepared ages ago instantly dispersed. Lines and rows of diamond-shaped icicles wildly shot out in all directions. The powerful impetus pushed back all the surrounding swordsmen simultaneously.

Suo Jia had already reached the Great Mage rank. His magic power and spirit power had thus reached equivalent points. The current Diamond Charge's destructive power had increased by

severalfold. In particular, the diamond-shaped icicles had basically become real icicles, with terrifyingly sharp points. Unless a shield was used to block them, leather armor would be useless against these icicles, and would be instantly pierced through.

Moreover, one couldn't forget that while both the Diamond Charge and Ice Roar were strong, the main point they both shared was that they weren't physical attacks. Instead, their magic destructive abilities were their true strengths, as well as their freezing effects.

Although most people successfully blocked the Diamond Charge, the cold air wasn't something a shield could guard against. Magic required magic defenses, but shields could only block physical attacks, they were completely useless against magic.

Due to the force of the Diamond Charge, all the frozen swordsmen were pushed backward, falling over in the process. Like glass, their bodies instantly shattered into thousands of tiny pieces.

This was how terrifying a Great Mage was. With Suo Jia's current magic power and spirit power levels, he could activate Diamond Charge ten times in a row, or Ice Roar five times in succession. To an ordinary soldier, this kind of attack was impossible to defend against. Once they encountered something like this, they could do nothing but await their death.

The most frightening people on the battlefield weren't the warriors, but the mages. If a mage was provided enough time to activate a magic, the result would be terrifying. A normal soldier

was just an average person that had gone through training; how could they possibly go against an expert of the Great Mage level face-to-face? How would a normal soldier have any other fate aside from being instantly killed?

Suo Jia saw the shocked and devastated expressions that the enemy had, but still refused to relent. He waved his right hand, and a blue light appeared. The next moment....a roaring ice vortex shrieked as it appeared a few dozen meters away from Suo Jia. It formed thousands of ice blades, which then viciously spiraled outwards. All the swordsmen present were instantly hacked into pieces that were then smashed and scattered, like pieces of meat in a meat grinder. Absolutely no body parts remained intact.

Chapter 223: First Sign Of A Conspiracy

(Part 1)

Naifa Lian's whole body shook as she stared in disbelief at Suo Jia's imposing figure. Even though she had witnessed the scene with her own eyes, she still didn't dare to believe that this was reality.

Suo Jia was really too powerful on the battlefield. His body gracefully leapt up, and after winding through the air a few times, he quickly landed where the enemy was most concentrated. As he used the Water God's Shield to block a few incoming blades, Diamond Charge dispersed from Suo Jia, instantly destroying all the enemies within a 10 meter range!

Following immediately afterwards, he waved his hand and activated an Ice Roar. Blades of ice combined to form a spiraling storm that viciously spun outwards. This damaged everything within that same 10 meter range; however, this didn't include just people, but the sturdy shields as well. Both shield and human were constantly hacked at by the ice blades, resulting in everything being slashed into pieces which were then scattered by the wind.

How could he even be called a human, he was clearly a death god reaping souls. The speed at which he slaughtered the enemy was beyond frightening. Normally, a person would kill a group of people one by one, but Suo Jia would kill them in groups, harvesting batches of souls repeatedly. He'd randomly activate a magic, and at least 20-30 people would fall.

To Suo Jia, the swordsmen's attacks weren't threatening at all.

The Water God's Shield completely guaranteed Suo Jia's safety. In combination with Diamond Charge, Suo Jia seemed like an undefeatable Mage Deity to the swordsmen!

Of course, Suo Jia was basically bullying them. Firstly, he was taking advantage of the swordsmen's weakness. If it were Dawn City's elite lance users, he wouldn't dare do the same brazen style attack. It would be stranger if the lance users didn't stab him to death; those guys were very proficient in battle qi.

Secondly, these swordsmen all used close ranged attacks. They also put priority on their defense, so their attacks weren't that powerful. Most importantly, they didn't have any long ranged attacks at all. Because of this, Suo Jia was completely unafraid of them. He would use the Water God's Shield to block all the attacks, activate Diamond Charge to push away the enemy to their deaths, then use Ice Roar. Everything was amazingly simple and easy. Suo Jia was displaying a mage's might brilliantly.

Of course, although Suo Jia was powerful, it was only due to the fact that there were no experts nearby. This wasn't by chance; Suo Jia had purposely planned this outcome. Not everyone could fly; out of the entire battlefield, only 37 people could fly. One of them was Suo Jia, and the remaining 36 were obviously the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes.

In general, Suo Jia had given the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes the responsibility of unyieldingly attacking, while he was in charge of massacre. After all... no matter how powerful the the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were, their slaughter rate couldn't ever possibly hold a candle to a mage's.

While Suo Jia was happily slaughtering his way through, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes weren't just idling around. Their objective wasn't just killing off the swordsmen, but more importantly, to find the enemy's corporals, sergeants, and lieutenants....and eliminate them!

“Chi...” A fierce whistle pierced the air as Duo Mei swung the purple crystal in her hand with all her strength. Thousand Feathers instantly activated, blasting out at the sergeant as fast as lightning. Although he tried to use weapons to block, he was still thrown backwards from the explosion. At the same time, Duo Mei suddenly emitted her wind elemental battle qi, and the powerful impetus pushed the attack towards the opposite party.

“Clang! Clang! Clang!” Duo Mei sent three slashes in succession at her opponent, who frantically tried to evade. The last attack sent the enemy further and further backwards in a struggling state.

Duo Mei's strength actually wasn't superior to the other party's, in fact the opponent's strength was far greater than hers. However, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all had this trait: their attacks were extremely explosive, their speeds super fast. With the addition of the unrivaled armors and weapons they possessed, as well as their plentiful experience and battle skills, plus the amazingly mighty Thousand Feathers, anyone encountering them would be faced with a headache.

The sergeant struggled to stand in place, blankly looking at Duo Mei, who was rapidly getting further and further from him. He

didn't understand, why hadn't she immediately defeated him? Instead, she had happily turned around and left. Could it be that... she was letting him go?

At that moment, an ear-splitting shriek came from behind him; it was a Thousand Feathers attack. With the current circumstances, he was completely unable to avoid it. In that instant, the attack blasted into his back, and after a fierce explosion, the sergeant suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood into the air. He staggered forward a few steps, but before he could stabilize himself, a dazzling war blade had already whizzed past his neck. A sizable head fell to the ground, just like that.

The instant before he died, the sergeant had suddenly realized; in actuality...it wasn't that the other party wasn't killing him, but... with the close relationship and mutual understanding with the rest of her companions, she had understood that there was no longer any need for her to act further. Naturally, someone else would smoothly send him to his death.

The moment that sergeant closed his eyes in regret, the lieutenant on the other side gave a miserable, sharp cry. At the same time, 6 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes shot out from around him. In that instant, the pitiful lieutenant was hit with 6 attacks simultaneously. He was first met with their wild and explosive charges from their spears, and then he was deeply cut by their war blades.

Bleeding to death, the lieutenant also unwillingly collapsed on the ground. In the fight just now, he had slashed at his opponents at least 20-30 times. However, his attacks had been completely

ineffective. When the opposite party was sent flying from the attacks, they had quickly tossed some red-colored thing in their mouth, then immediately charged back in the air, as if the ones that had just been attacked previously wasn't them.

Then, when he was caught unawares, he had been abruptly assaulted with the collective attacks of all six of them. Against such an assault, even people that were two times stronger than him wouldn't have been able to block it all, let alone him. The spears from six different directions instantly destroyed his battle qi protective shield. Then....after he had struggled to block three blades, the remaining three blades had instantly cut through his body, ending his life!

Although he was unwilling to resign to such a situation, the battlefield was just like that. A person's power always seemed insignificant. Although his strength had far surpassed the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes', the end result was still his loss. This was a battlefield! No righteousness and justice existed here.

Although, there was only a total of 37 people including Suo Jia, this entire 20,000 man group had been completely thrown into disarray. Seeing a large majority of their companions slaughtered, the swordsmen all began to panic. When death was right next to them, they obviously didn't take any other dangers into account. Just as Suo Jia and the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had planned to do, the entire group had fallen into chaos.

Seeing the disorderly scene, as well as the quickly dying soldiers, Karuda finally realized that wanting to safely recall the swordsmen would most likely be impossible. He had to dispatch experts to the

front to save them instead.

After a string of commands, 200 figures quickly leapt out, rushing towards the city walls at full speed. Their task was to obstruct Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, giving the swordsmen the chance to successfully retreat.

Suo Jia darkly smiled when he saw the quickly nearing enemy. The instant the rescue team arrived, Suo Jia suddenly gave a shrill whistle towards the sky. Following this, Suo Jia and the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all rose into the air. Seeing them leap up so high, the swordsmen and the 200 member rescue team rushing over raised their heads in bewilderment. They didn't understand, why were these guys jumping so high for no reason?

“Twang! Twang! Twang...” While everyone was wondering what was going on, the sound of bowstrings rang out from the top of the walls. A glittering rain of arrows filled the sky and came pouring down. At the same time, Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes flew across the air, momentarily leaving the range the shower of arrows covered.

After seeing this, everyone suddenly realized what had happened. Originally...they had thought that with Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes present, the Dawn defenders definitely wouldn't dare to release arrows. However, they hadn't imagined that these guys could actually fly so high at such rapid speeds. Although they weren't as fast as the arrows, they had enough time to leave the area before the sharp arrows came raining down.

“Twang! Twang! Twang!...” The archers on the city walls were

relentless, shooting out volley after volley of arrows. The storm of attacks poured down in torrents. In the blink of an eye, the entire line of swordsmen had collapsed. Even if they were able to defend against the first wave, they couldn't possibly block the second.

With the disturbance caused by Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, the swordsmen group had already been completely routed. Thus, they weren't even able to tell where the arrows were coming from for a moment, let alone what kind of defenses to put up. After 10 waves of arrow showers, the corpses of the swordsmen group had completely covered the ground. Even the 200 experts of the rescue team that had rushed over had been unable to avoid this fate, and all had succumbed to violent deaths.

Loftily standing before the line of corpses, Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes stuck up their thumbs in the direction of the distant 300,000 men enemy troops. Everyone watched as their thumbs up all simultaneously flipped downwards to point at the ground. It was clear from their expressions that they were looking down on the enemy, making the enemy so angry that they almost had convulsions.

Chapter 224: First Sign Of A Conspiracy

(Part 2)

Seeing Suo Jia and his group's performance, Karuda felt angry, ashamed, and heartache all at the same time. Putting aside those 20,000 swordsmen and 10,000 armored chariot soldiers, who were just ordinary soldiers, didn't matter much if they died. It wasn't worth feeling heartache over their deaths. However, the 200 member rescue team that had rushed over later were experts among experts, yet all of them had been cut down here. This was too great of a loss.

This was a battlefield. Nobody could stand straight after going against that shower of arrows. Even if they stood against the first wave, there's no way they could've lasted after the second wave. Humans had limits after all. No matter how powerful an expert was, they'd be the same as any other average person after reaching their limits.

Karuda had used up lots of energy and time to subdue these 200 experts on the rescue team. Warriors in this world were all arrogant, and would never easily follow another person.

Under the gazes of Karuda and the Alliance leader, Suo Jia's group of people stood tall and straight, with mocking expressions on their faces. Behind Suo Jia's group, thousands of ropes were let down from the top of the walls. Afterwards...thousands of figures quickly slid down the ropes, rushing to the battlefield. They gathered all the refined iron arrows from the enemy corpses, then transported them back to the city walls.

“Not good, they’re recollecting their arrows.” The Alliance leader shouted.

The Alliance leader and Karuda exchanged knowing glances as they both thought that the opposite party was extremely brazen; going to recollect arrows without caring about the possible dangers. Surely, this was because there weren’t many arrows in the city. In that case, they couldn’t let their soldiers’ deaths be in vain. No matter what, they wouldn’t let the other party collect their arrows. Otherwise, that piercing rain of arrows would make it impossible for them to attack back.

After the dozen waves of arrow showers earlier, the ground was covered with at least 100,000 refined iron arrows. When summed together, they were worth a massive amount. Karuda and the Alliance leader firmly believed that Dawn couldn’t possibly have that many arrows of this type.

There wasn’t any time to think about it any further. Karuda hurriedly ordered for the large army to quickly press forwards and block their opponents from obtaining the arrows. After receiving this command, the 100,000 pike users from Oz City, as well as 20,000 archers, gradually began to advance. No matter what, they had to prevent the other party from recovering their arrows.

Suo Jia’s group didn’t pay any mind to the nearing enemy troops at all; they just stood in the same place. They knew that the longer they stayed there, the more arrows they’d be able to retrieve. These arrows were just too valuable; one was worth 100,000 gold. Losing any of them would be heart-wrenching.

Seeing the attitudes of Suo Jia's group further solidified Karuda's and the Alliance leader's belief that there weren't many arrows remaining in Dawn. They ordered all the soldiers to quickly advance; once they entered the shooting range, the archers on their side would immediately fire.

After receiving the order, the army's advancement speed immediately increased by several fold. Everyone began to break into a run. Soon afterwards, Suo Jia's group was already within their shooting range. The 20,000 archers all drew their bows, and a rain of arrows filled the air, whizzing down towards them.

Faced against the enemy rain of fire, Suo Jia bitterly laughed and helplessly shook his head. He said to Duo Mei, who was standing next to him, "You guys hold this attack off for a bit, as I can't do anything about it. My Water God's Shield can't block this kind of arrow shower."

Duo Mei nodded and slowly drew the Angelic Phoenix war blade from her back. She brandished her blade and led her companions to brave against the raining arrows. Everyone watched as they charged over at the enemy archers.

"Oh....my god." Everyone couldn't help but gasp when they saw the arrows that struck the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' bodies all fall to the ground. What the hell did that count as? What in the world were those guys wearing? They weren't even afraid of a rain of arrows, how were they supposed to be fought against?

The 36 figures flashed with lightning fast speed, instantly covering the 200 meter distance, and slaughtered their way

through the group of enemy archers. Their 2 meter long war blades danced through the air, and the archers that only wore light leather armor became the victims of a massacre. In a mere moment, the entire enemy frontline had fallen apart; the pike users in the back couldn't move up, and the archers in the front couldn't move back.

120,000 enemy soldiers were dumbstruck and scared witless as they watched the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes slaughtering their way through. Dawn City's 100,000 slave soldiers were completely stunned as well. What...the hell were these people? Were they War Deities that had descended from the heavens? They were impervious to sword and spear, and had gone through the 100,000 man army as if they hadn't existed.

After a moment of silence, a world-shaking cheer came from all of Dawn City's walls. It was just too amazing, too powerful. Seeing the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes make their way through the enemy troops unhindered made all the slave soldiers want to just charge out as well, and kill everything without restraint.

For a while, the slave soldiers all began to roar, shouting for the enemies to be let go so that they could kill as much as they wanted as well. Merely spectating made them unbearably restless.

Seeing how the morale of the soldiers had risen to an extreme, General Jason lightly waved his hand. In that moment...the clear sound of a gong rang out. Hearing this, the group collecting arrows all stopped their work, and immediately turned around to head back towards the walls. Like a group of agile monkeys, they climbed up the ropes to get back onto the city walls. In only a

moment, the entire area in front of the city walls had become empty.

Although not that much time had passed, 80,000/120,000 refined arrows that had been shot out had already been retrieved. This result was already quite good; there was no need to collect all of the arrows. It wasn't like the arrows were going to sprout legs and run away or anything.

Seeing the arrow-collecting group disperse after completing their job, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes stopped their zealous fighting as well. They left the battle perimeter to re-gather behind Suo Jia. Then, all of them sped back towards the city walls, and 37 figures rose up into the air, instantly scaling up the 10 meter high city walls. They unyieldingly turned around, and made a provocative gesture at the army behind them. If they had skill, they should come up and attack.

Although the soldiers were all furious at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' taunt, none of them dared to move without any orders. Instead, they held themselves back and internally dealt with their frustration, their morale also falling by leaps and bounds.

Karuda and the Alliance leader both knew that continuing to battle like this would only lead to more losses, and wouldn't be of any use at all. If they continued to get heavily injured by Dawn Army's power, their soldiers would probably end up feeling fear and resignation towards the opposite party.

Karuda laughed maliciously and commanded loudly, "Spread my orders. Immediately go back to original stations. Let them hide in

their shell; we'll slowly exhaust them."

Following this command, the enemy army all retreated backwards to set up camp, confronting Dawn Army from the distance. They weren't willing to send out war chariots, nor were they willing to initiate any attacks, which left them stuck in a helpless situation.

As time passed by, the night grew deeper and deeper. It was a cloudy night, and the starlight from the sky was almost nonexistent. General Jason frowned as he lifted his head to look at the black clouds in the sky, and said, "Not good, the enemy will definitely take advantage of such a dark night and attack the city. After all...the opposite party's army has 100,000 thieves. They're experts at night battles. On the other hand, our archers become blind from the darkness."

"Hehe..." Suo Jia chuckled at this and said, "Don't worry about that. I'll immediately dispatch the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes to guard the city. It doesn't matter if those thieves don't come, but if they do dare to come, Dawn Army won't be afraid of them either."

Suo Jia turned around and whispered a few sentences to Duo Mei. Afterwards...Duo Mei excitedly nodded, and led her companions to quickly leave the room so that they could carry out Suo Jia's plans.

General Jason couldn't help but feel puzzled at Suo Jia's mysterious expression. Even after contemplating the situation for a long time, he still couldn't understand it. Helpless, he asked Suo

Jia for help. After Suo Jia explained, General Jason was completely stunned for a moment, before he raised his head and heartily laughed. The worry on his face had completely vanished as well.

It was night, when the starlight was dim, and the wind was extremely swift. Just as General Jason had anticipated, in the attempt to seize Dawn City in one go, the 100,000 man thief army had been completely dispatched, all charging towards Dawn City.

It wasn't that the Alliance leader was trying to get ahead of himself and was willing to send all his people at once. The thieves were just really too proficient at night. Even if they didn't have enough power, they could still safely retreat. Thus, this movement could only lead to a battle with benefits, and no major losses.

In the middle of the night, the 100,000 thieves concealed themselves with the darkness, and silently made their way towards Dawn's city walls. However, they hadn't imagined that their every movement and action would be tracked by the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' eyes.

Seeing the mass of thieves that stretched far and wide, Duo Mei furrowed her brows. This thief army was really too formidable. They could run up the current city walls by foot, and the walls would fall into enemy hands within seconds. Exactly what kind of plans did Suo Jia have to disrupt the thief army's night raid attack?

Chapter 225: Two Sided Pincer Attack (Part 1)

It was night. The wind grew fiercer, and the torches on Dawn's city walls flickered with the wind like will-o-wisps. Although they emitted glows, they were not able to illuminate the surroundings.

Despite the fact that there was a guard stationed every 10 meters on the wall, they seemed to have their backs turned to resist the chilly, night winds. All of Dawn City seemed cold and quiet.

However, this was all just a facade. In reality, this was only a scene that one outside the city would see. If they saw what was going on within it, they'd realize that the situation was completely different. This was clearly a restless night!

The 60,000 slave soldiers and 10,000 regular slave soldiers all carrying bows were tightly packed together inside the passageways along the city walls, waiting for the enemy's attack. The network of arrows from the total of 70,000 archers was something that even gods couldn't pass through.

Finally, under the cover of the dark night, the thief army began to rush towards the city walls. When they reached the 100 meters point, they didn't dispatch any sentries; after slightly organizing their formation, the 100,000 thieves quickly sprinted forwards.

The reason they hadn't dispatched any sentries was to avoid possibly alerting the enemy. Going onto the walls and checking the movements behind them would definitely alert the guards on the

walls. Once that happened, Dawn would be able to set up preparations to counter, and the result would be hard to determine.

In addition, the thieves were rulers of the night. They weren't at all afraid of their actions resulting in defeat; so what if they lost? With the protection of the night, they'd be able to safely retreat. As for Dawn's archers, they couldn't possibly see the thieves in such darkness.

Battles all involved deaths, and the thieves all knew that people would surely die here. However, they strongly believed that these people wouldn't be themselves. This was their self-confidence that allowed them to look down on Dawn's archers.

"Shu!" Just as the thieves had entered the 50 meter range, a fiery, scarlet light skyrocketed out from the ground like a fire dragon. After flying up to a height of several hundred meters, it violently exploded in mid-air, bursting into brilliant red clouds of light.

"Creak...creak...creak..." The thieves couldn't help but raise their heads to look up at the strange flames. Just then, the tell-tale hair-raising "twang" sound of bowstrings loosing made all the thieves immediately pale.

That's right, while the archers couldn't possibly aim at the enemy in the darkness, Dawn's long-range archers didn't rely on such things anyways. After practicing for so long, they had mastered the skill of attacking by covering a specific area with a rain of arrows.

As per Suo Jia's command, Duo Mei's group was monitoring the enemy from various places. As soon as the enemy had entered the 50 meter range from the walls, the girls had immediately made a signal. This single signal had been enough to set off the Dawn Army encompassing shooting attacks from the city walls.

"Wu..." The instant the bowstrings had all thrummed... miserable cries rang out, and the thieves in the front felt as if the darkness had suddenly become deeper. They then felt a fierce pain throughout their entire bodies. By the time they had figured out what was going on, at least 5 refined iron arrows had already pierced their bodies. It was impossible to stay alive after being hit by such an attack.

Every place within 10,000 meters in front of the city had been filled with 70,000 refined iron arrows. Countless thieves in the frontlines had died from the shower of arrows; it was impossible to count the exact number in the darkness of the night.

Despite hearing the desolate wails and howls outside the city, the slave soldiers remained still. All of them had been on a battlefield before; they all knew that it wasn't some kind of charity. Everything they did to stay alive was a result of their hard work. Being merciful to the enemy was being ruthless to themselves!

Nocking the arrow, raising the bow, pulling the bowstring, and shooting...after this string of actions, the air was filled with arrows. They flew farther and farther, shooting out into the night. Without an exception, every wave of attacks that descended would give rise to pitiful wails outside the city.

Although the first wave of attacks inevitably missed its targets, this wasn't a big deal. Starting from the 50 meter range all the way up to the 300 meter range, it was completely filled with the thief army. The thieves in the back were constantly entering this zone of death. Although the frontlines were filled with desolate cries, they were soldiers. If they hadn't received the command to, they could not selfishly retreat!

The enemy was too great, too concentrated. Dawn's long-ranged archers were basically shooting randomly. So what if they couldn't see? Even if they shot wildly, they'd be able to hit their targets; Dawn had nothing but arrows. Each person would have to shoot 1000 arrows to use up all their arrows. The problem was that if 10 million arrows were shot within that perimeter, there would be enough to stack up several layers of them on top of the ground. It would be to the point where the arrows would basically bury the enemy.

Finally, after Dawn's long ranged archers had shot out 20 waves of arrows, there were no sounds but miserable howls and moans to be heard. Because it was night, nobody knew the exact results of the battle; they would have to wait for daybreak for the exact statistics.

When the last cry gradually faded out, the sky had already begun to brighten. The break of dawn lit up the area before Dawn City, revealing a ground full of black corpses soaked with dark blood, like a scene from hell. The area before Dawn City was completely dyed scarlet, and a pungent smell that made one vomit permeated the air.

Suo Jia calmly sat within the city lord's mansion, listening to Duo Mei's report. They had encountered 100,000 thieves during last night's attack, and only 30,000 had successfully run away. The other 70,000 thieves were laying in eternal rest outside Dawn City.

Suo Jia was quite satisfied with this outcome. Although they hadn't completely annihilated the enemy, having such results was quite good already. After such a long period of war, Dawn still hadn't lost a single soldier!

Up until now, during this second Dawn war, Dawn Army had already destroyed 100,000 enemy men. Amongst these were 10,000 armored chariot soldiers, 20,000 swordsmen, and 70,000 thieves. This was already one third of the enemy's total forces.

However, Suo Jia didn't dare relax. He knew that these people that had died in the battle were just the enemy's ordinary troops. Suo Jia was still afraid of Oz City's main force, which hadn't moved at all yet.

After last night's battle, the Thief Alliance army had pretty much been destroyed. From the beginning, the war had basically been between Dawn and Oz City. After losing 70,000 men from their main force, the Thief Alliance was not only powerless against Dawn's might, they had also raised Dawn Army's guards and motivation. Now, the Thief Alliance army could only pray that Oz City's main force would be able to seize Dawn.

Inside their army camp, Karuda and the Alliance leader were

sitting, ashen faced. Karuda was still okay in comparison, but the Alliance leader had already lost all energy, his expression disheartened and at a loss. He just couldn't understand how the enemy could be so dominating, to be able to ignore the 100,000 thieves even in the darkness, and utterly defeat them. The Thief Alliance would most likely even break apart now.

However, although their main forces had suffered many losses, they definitely wouldn't admit defeat. As long as Dawn was destroyed, everything would be alright. After obtaining the territory and rebuilding a large army, they'd quickly develop and expand.

Most importantly, the Thief Alliance's real experts hadn't acted yet. The 180 thief groups each had recommended a single expert to join the battle. These experts could definitely stand on their own, and were extremely powerful people. Right now...was probably the time for them to act.

The Alliance leader slowly lifted his head and said in a heavy voice, "City Lord Karuda. I think...that we shouldn't continue attacking them straight on like this. Dawn Army's defense is just too powerful. If we continue to charge like this, it wouldn't matter how many more troops we get, Dawn would still be able to kill them all."

"Mm..." Karuda nodded in agreement, "That's right, we should still try to trap them first, then combine that with provocations and lead the battle. As long as Dawn City relaxes their guard, our large group of experts can charge onto the city walls and take control. That way, we'll win the battle!"

“That’s right...” The Alliance leader’s eyes shone coldly, “Starting from tomorrow morning, we’ll dispatch groups of the main force in rotation to challenge them, wearing them down over a long period of time. Once Dawn loosens their guard and is unable to move, we’ll send out our absolute experts and take control of a section of the city walls, and then attack and occupy Dawn through these openings!”

The Alliance leader smiled coldly, “In addition, while normal people only know that our Thief Alliance has 180 thief group members, with a total force of 200,000 men, Dawn will make be making a fatal mistake if they believe that our strength is really that little. Within the six countries’ common zone, we still have two alliance groups in strategic cooperation with us, for a total of 500,000 more men.”

Chapter 226: Two Sided Pincer Attack (Part 2)

“What!” Karuda cried out in astonishment at the Alliance leader’s words.

Seeing Karuda’s deathly pale face, the Alliance leader couldn’t help but secretly smirk to himself. He knew that with the great losses of their strength, his position in Karuda’s eyes had fallen drastically. That’s why he had been so shocked just now after hearing this tiny bit of information.

With a self-confident smile, the Alliance leader said mysteriously, “Actually, we also have a branch with an 100,000 man thief army from the six countries’ common zone. Their task is to rob any merchant groups that pass through the common zone. Thus....we and the two other great Thief Alliance groups in the area signed a strategic pact to become tactical partners.”

Karuda nodded in understanding and excitedly exclaimed, “Then what are you waiting for, hurry up and go write a letter to tell them to attack Dawn from the other side. That way, we can initiate a two-sided pincer attack. Even if we cannot break through Dawn, we can at least trap them to their deaths. I refuse to believe that their 100,000 man army doesn’t need to eat!”

“Yea...” The Alliance leader nodded and said coldly, “Don’t worry, our 100,000 man group from the Alliance has already neared Dawn’s other wall. As for our other two partners, I’ll go write them a letter now. Although I cannot promise too much support, I can guarantee that gathering at least 200,000 men will

definitely not be an issue.”

“Hehehehe...” Karuda happily stood up and excitedly wrung his hands together. Thieves able to stay alive in this common zone had to be elites. Their combat abilities couldn't be compared to a normal thief's. They could already see their victory over this battle against Dawn!

In Karuda's opinion, Dawn City wouldn't be able to persevere for much longer. The 100,000 soldiers within the city needed to eat, so as long as they locked the city in, the city would run out of food. In other words, there was no need to face Dawn head-on. If they dragged the fight out, victory would be in within their grasp.

Of course, Karuda had also considered the possibility of Dawn Army charging out. However...once they left the city, they'd lose the protection from the city walls. In that case, Dawn Army would definitely die. Karuda had put so much effort into training his elite soldiers for 30 some years, so they'd definitely be able to slaughter Dawn's slave soldiers. The only thing Karuda feared was Dawn Army not leaving the city.

In terms of both combat ability and military strength, Oz City was far superior to Dawn; they couldn't even be compared. If Dawn Army lost a man, it would be permanent. But Oz City's Army still had 800,000 men in their city, so they could replace their members at any time.

Day gradually progressed into noon. The enemy troops had all gathered together, but this, they learned their lesson and didn't dare to get too close to Dawn. The past day, Dawn Army had

taught them a severe lesson; so what if they were elite soldiers? No matter how strong they were, they couldn't possibly display their power on the battlefield. Stratagem was number one.

Currently, Suo Jia was sitting in his city lord's mansion, quietly using Enchanted Zhiyao to make potions. Suddenly...the sound of hurried footsteps were heard. Suo Jia lifted his head to look, and saw General Jason quickly walk in.

General Jason saluted and then said in a serious tone, "City Lord, the situation has taken a slight turn for the worse. Our mounted scouts reported that a large amount of thief forces have gathered together in the direction of the six countries' common zone. Although it cannot be ascertained, I'm 80% sure that they are heading towards us."

Suo Jia calmly replied, "That's fine. The city walls are only 100 meters long there, making it easy to defend, and hard for them to attack. As long as we have enough archers, we definitely won't be broken through easily."

"But..." General Jason frowned and said, "The enemies outside and inside are completely different matters. You can't compare to these thieves to the ones in this country. The ones on the common zone are experts that have experienced the battlefield multiple times. Although those outer city walls are short, the narrow ravine path can provide the thief troops good hiding places. As long as they are move along the walls and use armored chariots to slowly get closer, they can quickly rush up once they reach the walls."

General Jason paused for a bit, then said in concern, "Our

current arrangements can easily deal with normal experts. However, if these experts appear, we'll be in danger. If they get too close, nobody will be able to stop them from getting onto the walls!"

Suo Jia knit his brows together and firmly said, "Then how about this? Transfer 10,000 regular slave soldiers over, then pair them with 10,000 swordsmen. Also arrange for 5,000 regular pike users to assist at any time. I think if we do that, there shouldn't be a problem."

"That..." General Jason anxiously pressed, "That won't do. I said before that once they get on the walls, the swordsmen won't be able to stop them, just like how the enemy's swordsmen couldn't do anything to resist you earlier. Once they manage to get past and onto the walls, we'll be in trouble!"

"Hm?" Suo Jia asked in confusion, "General Jason, I still don't understand. If 10,000 swordsmen go over, how could they possibly get onto the walls? Unless...you're saying that the crossbows in the swordsmen's possession are just toys?"

"Pa!" General Jason face-palmed and bitterly laughed, "Right, right, right...pretend I didn't say anything. How could I have forgotten that, haha....I'll go make the arrangements now!" General Jason turned around with a huge smile on his face. Indeed...with 10,000 crossbows, the hind walls of the city were well fortified. The 10,000 regular slave archers would shoot from long distance range, the 10,000 swordsmen would use their crossbows to shoot from mid-range, and the 5,000 pike users would be able to assist at any moment. They really wouldn't be

afraid of any attacks!

Suo Jia watched General Jason leave, then shook his head and looked down to begin the Enchanted Zhiyao process once more. After using Enchanted Zhiyao in succession, Suo Jia had discovered that this Enchanted Zhiyao improved his magic power and spirit power by a ridiculous amount. It was at least two times faster than meditation. That's why, Suo Jia had recently become obsessed with Enchanted Zhiyao; it was quite addicting!

Although Suo Jia was only an elementary Great Mage, his magic power and spirit power had already reached the realms of a peak Great Mage, and maybe even past that!

What uses would increased magic power and spirit power bring? That's right....this meant he'd be able to activate much more magic. Moreover, his magic attacks would be more powerful. However...since he hadn't advanced in meditation realms, he couldn't learn any new magics.

Activating magics didn't rely on only magic power and spirit power, it also required the user's own research in magic, as well as their understanding of the elements. These had to be slowly and incrementally done, and couldn't be completed in a short period of time.

At the moment, Suo Jia's comprehension and perception of magic was still in the elementary Great Mage realm. However... his magic power and spirit power had already reached the maximum point of a Great Mage, and was still exponentially rising. His magic's might continued to rise, and his magic range, AOE, and

attack accuracy were all wildly increasing.

While he was absorbed in the Zhiyao, a figure flashed through the door, and Duo Mei gloomily walked into the room. Before she had reached where Suo Jia sat, her voice had already rang out, “Young Master, the enemy outside the city has dispatched men to provoke us. They want us to advance in battle and take the lead in initiating fights. What should we do?”

Suo Jia replied without even lifting his head, “Ignore them, I have no time to wait upon them.”

“That...” Duo Mei struggled a bit when she saw Suo Jia’s indifferent expression. After a long time, she gritted her teeth and said strongly, “But if we continue to let them curse at us, it will majorly affect our soldiers’ morales. Most importantly, how can we just tolerate their provocation? Didn’t Young Master always say that any person that dares to make an enemy out of us would be painfully beaten up?”

“Hah...” Suo Jia sighed, and could only helplessly stop the Zhiyao he was doing. He bitterly smiled at Duo Mei and said, “If you’re depressed, then go lead your sisters to kill for a bit. Either way, with you girls’ strengths and mutual teamwork, they won’t be able to do anything to you.”

Duo Mei’s eyes suddenly lit up and she said excitedly, “That’s what I was saying. Young Master definitely wouldn’t allow others to bully us. Haha...I’ll go now, and let them taste the might of an Angelic Six-Winged Phoenix!”

“Wait!” Suo Jia suddenly shouted to stop her. He looked at her in confusion and said in a stern voice, “It’s fine if you go out to fight, but you have to remember that nobody can fight alone. If you are to act, you must all act together. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes don’t represent a single person, but all of you sisters! Only when you are all together are you girls at your strongest!”

Chapter 227: By War Of Attrition (Part 1)

“Ah.” Duo Mei said reluctantly, “That’s no good, only one person is provoking us. It’s only right if a single one of us goes out to oppose them as well. Otherwise, they’ll think we’re scared of them.”

“Hmph.” Suo Jia snorted and huffed angrily, “Who taught you whatever it is that is in that brain of yours? Remember this well, you girls aren’t heroes or anything, nor do I need heroes as subordinates. In addition...in regards to just character, there’s no way you can become a hero. That’s because I’ve seen your body, you’re undoubtedly a beautiful and dainty young lady. Since you’re a girl, don’t go around pretending to be some hero, ok?”

“Pfft...” Duo Mei giggled at Suo Jia’s words, and rolled her eyes at him in exasperation. She then said in a charming voice, “We also know we aren’t heroes, nor can we become heroes. But heroes wouldn’t possibly go against multiple enemies alone either.”

“Pei.” Suo Jia spat, and retorted in irritation, “You muddled girl, clear your head. This is a battlefield, not some competition arena. Nobody would ever be reasonable to you. Here, only the winners matter and the losers are always in the wrong. You’d better toss your current mindset.”

Suo Jia broke off and thought about something for a moment, before he said firmly, “That isn’t only true here either. Go back and tell everyone that no matter when, all heroes will always be despised by us. All of you must remember that a dead person doesn’t get any respect. Only a live person can enjoy face.”

Duo Mei asked in confusion, “What are you saying. Aren’t you underestimating us too much? Even if we go out alone, we definitely won’t lose. Don’t forget, the armors on our bodies are unrivaled. In addition, we can also glide in the air. Even if we cannot defeat our opponents, we can still run away.”

Suo Jia coldly looked at Duo Mei and replied, “That’s right, if all 36 of you act together, there is indeed no person that would be spared. However, did you ever think about what would happen if you went out alone, and there were multiple enemies that encircled and annihilated you? What would you do then? Do you think that they can’t strike you down from the air if you flew up into the air?”

“That...” Duo Mei paled at Suo Jia’s words. After Suo Jia’s reprimanding, she had finally been aroused from her ideal dream of being unrivaled.

It was just as Suo Jia had said. If all 36 of them worked together in harmony and helped each other out, nobody would ever be spared. However, if they acted alone, the outcome was much harder to determine. As soon as they flew up, they’d be shot back down, and then surrounded. By that time, even if they wanted to jump up and fly away, it would just be a pipe dream.

Seeing Duo Mei’s ashen face, Suo Jia sternly continued, “After returning, I want you to pass this onto all your sisters. You girls can never go out without the group. Even if there comes a day where all of you become genuine War Deities, you must still stick together. You can only display your greatest strengths when you’re

all together.”

Duo Mei looked at Suo Jia in admiration. Although...he was 7-8 years younger than her, Duo Mei felt sincere respect for him in terms of wisdom and knowledge, perhaps even worshipping him. There were many times where wisdom and vision were both amazing, and they had no relation to age at all.

Suo Jia then smiled and said, “Duo Mei, you must remember that the human mind isn’t used just for dazing off. You have to use your brain to think. Although...you girls don’t go out independently, whoever said that this isn’t just and honorable will be ridiculed.”

“Hm?” Duo Mei furrowed her brows and looked at Suo Jia in confusion.

“Hehe....” Suo Jia chuckled darkly and said in a low voice, “Although the other party only dispatched one person to provoke you, why must you listen to them? Why must you fight with them? You can’t just ignore him, let him freeze there, and go kill the enemy troops behind him instead!”

“Wa!” Duo Mei cried out in astonishment, and her eyes lit up. “That’s right, that’s right! That way, everyone will just say we’re too lazy to respond to the guy provoking us. Not a single person would be enough to get us to care for them. If they want to fight, it has to be 36v360,000 to be enjoyable.”

“Haha...” Suo Jia smiled and nodded in agreement. “That’s right, your thoughts are correct. However, there’s one point you got

wrong; 36v360,000 shouldn't be something everyone says, but only something you should say.”

“Hm?” Duo Mei looked at Suo Jia in confusion. “I know, that’s what I said. But what I mean is that everyone will also think the same.”

Suo Jia shook his head with a smile and said calmly, “You can’t wait for everyone else to think the same. What I’m getting at is that when you go out to battle, you should just shout out what you just said, and not just passively wait for the others to think of it. What if your opponents happen to be dumb and cannot realize this fact, or if their minds just cannot process it?”

“Oh.” Duo Mei suddenly nodded in understanding, and said excitedly, “That’s right...this should become our catchphrase. If we shout such an awe-inspiring phrase loudly and clearly before charging out, we’ll look so cool.”

Duo Mei seemed to be unable to wait any longer. When she saw the completely adorable face of Suo Jia in front of her, she suddenly walked forwards a step to hug Suo Jia, her red lips quickly giving Suo Jia’s tender, white face a peck. She then quickly ran out of the room while her voice rang out from the distance, “Don’t worry, just hand everything to me. I promise that I’ll beat them until the ground is covered with their teeth.”

Seeing Duo Mei’s figure grow farther and farther away, Suo Jia could only shake his head blankly. He was already 13 years old and he would already have erections every so often. The amount of times he had had erections and even the durations were increasing,

and Suo Jia knew that while he wasn't yet a mature adult, he could already enjoy what the adults enjoy most.

While Suo Jia was developing physiologically, his mentality was maturing as well. In the past, if Duo Mei were to kiss him, he wouldn't have had any other reaction than bewilderment, just why would she swap saliva with him?

In that previous instance, Suo Jia discovered that when Duo Mei had kissed him, his own heart had begun to beat wildly. His face began to grow red, and his erection had instantly shot up with a burning sensation. If Duo Mei was not so excited, she would've paid more attention to Suo Jia, and his secret would have been revealed.

It was Duo Mei's scent that had left Suo Jia addicted in particular. In the past...Suo Jia had always thought the smell of wine was the most fragrant, but now, all of his previous philosophy and ideals had been thrown out the window. The smell of a girl was the most heavenly scent in the world.

Suo Jia shook his head with a bitter smile, dispersing the stray thoughts in his mind, and focusing his attention back at the Enchanted Zhiyao. He understood that now wasn't the time for emotions between girls and guys. If he didn't increase his strength quickly, his dream would never be able to become a reality.

It was a pity that God seemed to like making things particularly difficult for him today, not allowing him to concentrate on Zhiyao. Not long after Duo Mei had left, Aimi and Aila rushed in.

Chapter 228: By War Of Attrition (Part 2)

Seeing the two girls that seemed to grow increasingly more beautiful every day, their bodies emitting a youthful aura, Suo Jia couldn't help but bitterly smile. Since they came, he couldn't just ignore them. In addition, Suo Jia knew that they wouldn't come searching for him for no reason.

Aimi and Aila sat on different sides of Suo Jia as they normally did. They had all known each other for a long time now, almost 6 years, and been together since they were young. Thus, their relationships with each other were extremely close, to a point that others couldn't even imagine.

As was accustomed, a single hand reached down Suo Jia's trousers. Grabbing ferociously onto the burning area of Suo Jia's crotch, Aimi spoke with astonishment, "Heavens, you've really exercised a lot these days. The muscle in this area is quite strong and hard."

Hearing Aimi's words, Aila reached down as well in curiosity. With a feel, she spoke, "It's not a muscle, it's a bone...."

"Eh." Suo Jia couldn't help but be stunned at the two girls. Just what were these two girls doing? He wasn't like the Suo Jia of the past, how could he survive such a tease now?

But after some thinking, Suo Jia came to a quick realization. Although they had grown in age, Aimi and Aila had never touched upon this area of knowledge. They hadn't had the opportunity

while in school, and no one had dared to talk to them about it while traveling with Suo Jia.

When he thought about it, Suo Jia realized that if it weren't for the Empress and her teachings, Suo Jia would have been like these two girls, oblivious to the affairs between man and woman.

Suo Jia took a deep breath, and pulled their hands away expressionlessly. At the same time, he asked them in a calm tone, "Why did you girls come looking for me? It can't just be to discuss if that place is muscle or bone."

"Hehe..." Aimi giggled in embarrassment and asked, "That's not it. We just saw Sister Duo Mei and the rest of them go out to fight, and we were feeling extremely envious of them. Thus, we came here to ask when the two of us could also participate in the real battle."

"That..." After hearing these words, Suo Jia suddenly realized that they hadn't yet entered a real, serious battle yet. As they had both already become full-fledged mages, they were indeed a bit behind.

Suo Jia smiled and said, "That's not urgent. Your task right now is to diligently study and quickly reach the Great Mage realm. Once the two of you have grasped strong enough defensive abilities, I'll naturally arrange a chance for you two to actually fight in a real battle."

Suo Jia then blankly stared at the sky outside the window and

murmured to himself, “This war won’t end in just one or two days. I have a feeling that it’ll be a long and drawn-out war that will definitely have many fights to come...”

The two girls finally sighed in relief. They definitely didn’t want to miss this training opportunity. However, they also understood that currently speaking, while their attack strength was decent, their defensive abilities were too lacking. Before they managed to make up for this weakness, Suo Jia definitely wouldn’t let them take risks. That being the case, their task was very clear.

There was no way they could obtain the Water God’s Shield, but after becoming Great Mages, they’d be able to learn the common defensive magic that all mages were able to access...Magic Shield. This was a common, divine magic. The Magic Shield’s defensive strength was dependent on the user’s magic power and spirit power. Although it was far from being comparable to the Water God’s Shield, it was definitely sufficient.

Suo Jia’s Water God’s Shield was the product of the Atlantis equipment set and it had a set 10,000 moles defensive strength, and the ability to repair itself 1000 moles per second. However, this wasn’t the Water God’s Shield’s true strength, but the effects of the Atlantis equipment set.

Water had extremely powerful buffering effects. Even if one jumped down from a height of several dozen meters, the water shield would still be able to absorb a majority of the impact force. That’s what this was water’s greatest trait, as well as the Water God’s Shield’s best feature.

The Water God's Shield buffering abilities were set according to Suo Jia's spirit power and magic power. If his magic power was said to be seawater, then his spirit power was the seawater's level of softness. The greater the amount of seawater, the softer it would become, and thus the larger its buffering effects would be.

If the earth element's defensive magics paid special attention to opposing vibrations and absorbing shock, the water element's defensive magics would be paying special attention to cushioning and evasion. The Water God's Shield was like a giant balloon, with the person being protected in the center of the balloon. All the attacks would be buffered by part of the balloon, and the balloon would also deform, deflecting the attack. Unless there was something that pierced through the balloon, the person within Water God's Shield wouldn't be able to feel the attack at all.

However, the common divine magic that Aimi and Aila were trying to master, Magic Shield, didn't have such effects. This was only a shield made from condensed magic power that blocked any outside attacks. Unless the magic power fueling the Magic Shield was exhausted, it would exist forever.

In addition, the divine Magic Shield couldn't cancel out all outside attacks. Once hit by an attack, the Magic Shield's user would receive a certain level of force. This worked the same way as a car crash. The passengers sitting within the car would receive a certain level of force, and the extent of this momentum would change depending on the opposite party's force.

Under the same attack and the same circumstances, a person protected by the Water God's Shield wouldn't feel anything at all.

However, a person protected by the Magic Shield would definitely suffer from the impact force.

Of course, for an attack to reach someone protected by the divine Magic Shield requires a certain amount of strength. If the divine Magic Shield's magic power was layered thickly enough and the spirit power supporting it was sufficiently strong, the Magic Shield would transform from a car to a tank. Affecting the person behind the shield would be quite difficult. Even if the user could feel the impulse, it was only a light shock that couldn't possibly injure anyone.

Basically, the Water God's Shield was indeed superior, but its defensive effects would vary depending on the person. The Water God's Shield could only be mastered by a water mage, while the divine Magic Shield was something that any mage could learn. No matter how envious a non-water mage was of the Water God's Shield, there was nothing to be done.

In addition, the Water God's Shield had long since stopped being passed down. Legends said that the defensive magic that it used had been searched for through all of history, but only the Atlantis Emperor had ever been able to use it. As for now, Suo Jia was obviously its only user.

After telling the two girls to train hard and try to learn the divine Magic Shield as early as possible, Suo Jia couldn't stay still. After being continuously interrupted and teased, his heart had already gotten restless. Thus, he could only go out and try to relax.

After leaving the city lord's mansion, Suo Jia ran along the

rooftops to reach the city walls. As he looked out, he saw that the enemy forces outside the city were currently in chaos. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were all brandishing their 2 meter long war blades, running unhindered through the enemy troops. Currently...a total of 100,000 men had already firmly surrounded them in 6 layers.

Suo Jia frowned, feeling that something was slightly off. He suddenly turned around to look at General Jason next to him, and urgently asked, "What's going on? Didn't they go out a while ago? Why haven't they returned yet?"

"Eh." Jason asked Suo Jia in confusion, "They left a while ago and they still haven't come back, but...they have the four colored potions, so there shouldn't be any need for concern."

"Not good." Without replying to Jason, Suo Jia focused his vision on the fight outside the city once more. When he looked closer, he couldn't help but shout loudly. He suddenly leapt off the city walls, rushing over towards the fight.

Suo Jia had only observed the situation for a short while. However, that was already enough for him to tell that it wasn't that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes didn't feel like returning, but that they couldn't. Currently...they were already surrounded by nearly 200 experts. Although they hadn't yet suffered from any injuries...they had already been pressured to the point where they could no longer drink the potions. They were defending against attacks from every angle every passing second. With the Space Shields in their left hand and their war blades in their right, how could they possibly have the time to drink potions.

Suo Jia knew that if the opposite party wanted to, they could definitely kill the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. Although the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had indestructible armors, the force of impact and shock would already be enough to kill them. The only reason the enemy hadn't acted yet was to prevent General Jason from dispatching support.

General Jason was indeed formidable, but that was only with respect to defense. He had never once commanded a battle with two armies before in his life. This whole time, he had focused his entire concentration on defense, and left General Harvey responsible for attack.

If General Harvey was here today instead, the enemy's evil schemes would've most likely been seen through ages ago. However, General Jason couldn't do the same. Even after watching the situation for so long, he hadn't understood it. Although the thief experts were well concealed, a close examination was enough to discern the fact that there was something wrong. It had been over a minute now, and while the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' attacks were very fierce, they hadn't been able to kill a single enemy. This was enough to prove that they weren't killing their enemy, but rather trying to resist.

Since Suo Jia had leapt down alone, he hadn't been labeled as significant by the enemy. There was a 100,000 man army currently surrounding the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, why would they pay any mind to a single person? Thus...the enemy had only dispatched 100 people to obstruct Suo Jia. In reality, they didn't believe that their evil schemes had been seen through. If that had really happened, there wouldn't have been only a single person

coming to assist, but rather, a large troop.

Suo Jia had indeed considered dispatching an entire troop, but that wasn't possible even if he wanted to. The city gates had long since been blocked, so where could his troops possibly come out from? Even if they did manage to get out, the enemy would definitely pounce on the enemy, and they'd just become funerary objects. Even if there was protection in the form of a barrage of arrows, the losses from both sides would be equal.

Suo Jia finally reached the fight. When saw the opposite party's troops come towards him, and then back at the chaotic fight going on 100 meters away, Suo Jia frowned deeply. When he had watched from a distance, he hadn't felt anything in particular, but now that he was closer, Suo Jia had suddenly discovered that the 200 experts surrounding the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were terrifyingly powerful. Any one of them could easily defeat two Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes working together, maybe even three working together. If it weren't for the protection of the Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes, as well as the flawless teamwork between the girls, they would've been slaughtered ages ago.

Chapter 229: Suo Jia Breaks Through (Part 1)

Although there were a hundred people present, none of them paid Suo Jia any mind. However, Suo Jia knew that once he was surrounded by them, he would be in a situation that he couldn't easily get out of. The Angelic Phoenixes were already in quite a bit of danger. If they got caught by the enemy, the losses on Suo Jia's side would be extremely great.

Suo Jia had spent way too much money on the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. It could be said that the amount of money spent on each of them could form small mountains. He couldn't afford to lose a single one of them.

Moreover, everyone had known each other for so long, so their relationships ran quite deep. Even if it didn't result in a loss of money, losing such a close friend was something Suo Jia refused to allow that to happen, and he would try his hardest to prevent it from happening. He was unwilling to let such a tragedy occur.

Suo Jia knew that although it was very dangerous, he'd have to pull some risks if he wanted to do something for the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' sakes. No matter what, he'd have to try his utmost...

Suo Jia gritted his teeth and waved his right hand. An Ice Roar came whistling outwards, quickly spiraling in the air before shooting out blades of ice, instantly turning the area in front of him into a human hell. With the Ice Roar's onslaught, at least 30 people instantly died.

Seeing the enemy fall into disarray, Suo Jia didn't dare waste any time. He suddenly jumped up into the air, leaping over to where the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were. If he traveled by ground, he would definitely be risking his life. By the time he ever managed to get through the enemy, quite a few of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would've probably been captured by the enemy.

Of course, flying above the army was extremely dangerous as well. Putting aside the enemy archers, even the middle-ranged weapons were enough to riddle Suo Jia with holes. Although the Water God's Shield was formidable, it wasn't unrivaled.

As expected, the soldiers all abruptly raised their heads to watch Suo Jia leap up. With their proficiency, they quickly began to store up battle qi. There were both bows and crossbows that were quickly drawn, all of them aimed at Suo Jia.

Suo Jia couldn't help but watch the situation below with clenched teeth. The feeling stimulated from danger had caused his hair to stand on end. He knew that if he didn't evade these attacks, his Water God's Shield would instantly break. He may be able to block a few dozen attacks, but facing hundreds, and even thousands, was impossible.

Suo Jia activated his recently learned but already mastered Rising Wave Steps. His body weaved through the arrow like a dragon, swiftly moving through the air. When it looked like he was moving left, he was actually leaping to the right.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh...a series of sounds could be heard as countless weapons, arrows, and crossbow bolts all whizzed down towards him. Suo Jia placed all his concentration into using the Rising Wave Steps to counter the attacks, his body moving around like a demon, shifting back and forth through the empty spaces in the air, successfully avoiding a majority of the attacks.

Of course, dodging all the attacks when they were so concentrated together was impossible. Suo Jia was hit by at least a dozen of them every second. Fortunately, the ones attacking him weren't really experts, so the Water God's Shield wasn't broken through. At the same time...the Water God's Shield completely protected Suo Jia, to the point where he wasn't even affected by the vibrational shocks. This was the Water God's Shield's greatest trait.

However, Suo Jia wasn't feeling self-satisfied over something as simple as this. The ones obstructing him were just small fries. The real experts were all surrounding to attack the Angelic Phoenixes. Suo Jia realized that when he reached the encircled Angelic Phoenixes, he would be seeking death if he dared to cross over like that.

“Wu...” Seemingly confirming Suo Jia's thoughts, an arrow quickly crossed the hundreds of meters distance and accurately struck the flying Suo Jia.

“Bang.” Like the sound of a burst balloon, the Water God's Shield that had already lost quite a bit of its energy had finally broken. At the same time, the powerful momentum forced the arrow forwards and it accurately struck Suo Jia's lower abdomen. This sent Suo Jia

flying backwards over 30 meters in the air before he finally fell to the ground.

Suo Jia covered his stomach in shock. He knew that it was because of guys like these that the Angelic Phoenixes were unable to break away. The moment they jumped, these guys would definitely manage to shoot them back down with arrows, and encircle them once more.

“Bang.” After he finally landed on the ground, the surrounding soldiers swarmed around him like a bunch of bees around honey. They strived to reach him first, and quickly surrounded him. They brandished the weapons in their hands, trying to cut Suo Jia down.

Although he had been shot down from the air, Suo Jia, being Suo Jia, had his skin-tight Monarch Armor protecting him, so he hadn't suffered from any major injury. After smoothly swallowing a Life Potion, his body instantly recovered.

Seeing the blades slash towards him like a torrent, Suo Jia couldn't help but smile in disdain. With a stamp of his right foot, Diamond Charge's devastation spread through the surroundings. If it was impossible to pass through air, then he'd just have to deal with going by ground.

Suo Jia reactivated the Water God's Shield and leisurely charged through the people in large strides, walking towards the Angelic Phoenixes. His hands continuously tipped the four colored potions into his mouth, allowing him to incessantly release Diamond Charges one after another. In an instant, everywhere Suo Jia passed through was swept away, and the closely packed enemy

troops had been split apart by Suo Jia to provide him a 10 meter wide passageway through.

Originally, when the 100,000 slave soldiers on the city walls had seen Suo Jia been shot down, they had been stunned from fear. However, now that they witnessed Suo Jia use such overpowering methods such as magics to open up a path through the concentrated army troops, the onlookers all cheered happily. Strong, too damn strong.

The world was just like this. An expert would receive respect from others, especially those experts that could ignore the existences of millions of people. At the moment....Suo Jia was undoubtedly a great hero in the slave soldiers' eyes. His high level was enough for him to be called a hero from the legends.

As he downed another potion, Suo Jia stamped on the ground once more. Following this movement, another Diamond Charge was activated. Countless sharp icicles shot out from Suo Jia, and any enemy that was in his way would stagger back a few dozen steps before collapsing onto the ground. All of them shattered into particles of ice, as if they were made from glass, and these broken shards covered the ground.

Finally, Suo Jia managed to rush to the fight. As the Diamond Charge opened up a pathway, Suo Jia finally saw the trapped Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. At the same time, the enemy surrounding them had also discovered Suo Jia charge his way over. In an instant, they immediately sent out dozens of men to welcome Suo Jia. No matter what, they wouldn't allow anyone to ruin their plans before they could reap the benefits.

Facing the oncoming enemy, Suo Jia subconsciously stomped on the ground once more, causing Diamond Charge to roar outwards. Originally, he'd thought that the enemy would be pushed away like they had been earlier. However, Suo Jia suddenly sensed that the men he was currently facing were not ordinary soldiers.

In response to Suo Jia's Diamond Charge, the dozens of enemies waved the weapons in their hands. Some used shields to face the attack head on, while others sent their own attack colliding into the Diamond Charge. In a mere instant, the ice was sent flying wildly in all directions, the dozens of figures charged out of the Diamond Charge attack without any harm.

That wasn't all. The enemy that had made their way through the attack seemed as if they hadn't encountered anything obstructing at all. Their speeds didn't decrease in the slightest, and they wildly brandished their weapons as they initiated their attack on Suo Jia. Their power and influence was on a frightening level.

Suo Jia knew that it was impossible for him to face the enemy's attack head-on. However, if he tried to go around, on the off chance that the enemy allowed him to, he wouldn't reach his destination in time. Besides, the enemy probably wouldn't let him. Suo Jia could clearly see that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes 30 meters away were unable to last any longer.

Although the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were very powerful, with explosive attacks, speed as fast as the wind, and impenetrable armor....this didn't mean that they were unrivaled. At the moment...some of the Angelic Phoenixes had already lost their

ability to counterattack. Their bodies were being tossed from side to side by the enemy's weapons, and a single glance was enough to tell that they were about to be captured.

Suo Jia looked at the dozen enemy experts charging at him like predators, and then back at the Angelic Phoenixes being captured alive, and he couldn't help but tilt his head back and give a loud, angry hiss towards the sky. It was at that moment that he'd finally understood the truth of reality: no matter how powerful one was, it didn't necessarily prove of any use on the battlefield. Group battles needed to be fought with other groups.

As matters currently stood, Suo Jia had to use all his strength. He suddenly clenched his hands into fists, and at the same time, the ring on his ring finger emitted a warm, milky-white glow.

Chapter 230: Suo Jia Breaks Through (Part 2)

“Light Harmonization Ring.” That’s right...this ring was the one that Suo Jia had extorted out of the old man emperor. Its ability was to bend light and conceal his body. Although it could only last 3 seconds, that was already enough. Three seconds of time was sufficient for Suo Jia to break through their defensive line and rush to save the Angelic Phoenixes.

Everyone watched as Suo Jia’s body suddenly flashed with a piercing, bright light. The next instant...Suo Jia’s body mysteriously vanished from the spot. The dozen experts couldn’t help but become dumbstruck at the scene.

“Wu...” After a mere pause, the sound of energy rang out from within the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes’ fight. Ice blades flew out, the freezing air wreaking havoc as it spiraled out from the center of the crowd.

This whole time, the Angelic Phoenixes had been trying their utmost to resist the surrounding attacks, and hadn’t actually discovered Suo Jia had come to save them. However, after suddenly sensing this familiar magic fluctuation and spell, the girls all knew that they had been rescued.

Suo Jia was a synonym for miracle in all of the girls’ minds. As long as he was present, everything would be fine. Now...that Suo Jia had arrived, he’d surely help them escape this fight successfully

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As the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were wild with joy, Suo Jia's low whisper rang out, "What are you all still standing there for, quick...immediately drink your potions, then prepare to break through with me using a sudden and violent assault."

After hearing this order, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all stopped their attacks without any hesitation, and allowed the enemy's wild attacks to come towards them and quickly reached to take out the four colored potions, simultaneously downing the bottles' contents. Their spirit power, battle qi, physical strength, and speed were all replenished, and the injuries on their bodies also recovered.

Meanwhile, Suo Jia hadn't stopped once. Ice Roars were continuously released out from the group of Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, and he wasn't concerned about hurting the girls as well.

Suo Jia knew that even if he didn't attack, the enemy surely would. In that case, it was best if he made a move first. Either way, the ice blades wouldn't be able to harm the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. In terms of the freezing air, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' fire elements were able to perfectly burn up the condensing ice.

However, although the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were able to ignore this attack, the enemy couldn't do the same. None of them were like the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, people with both fire and wind elements. Even if they could block the ice blades, they couldn't do anything against the freezing air. Now

that Suo Jia was wildly casting Ice Roars one after another, they were really unable to attack as they wished.

Currently speaking, Suo Jia still couldn't instantly cast Ice Roar. After all...the part of the equipment set that granted such an ability was still in an unknown location. Despite this, Suo Jia's unique activation method made it possible for Ice Roar to be casted in succession.

Ice Roar had quite a long activity time. There were at least six seconds between the beginning and end of its activation. Thus, because there were only 2-3 seconds passing between each Ice Roar, they were pretty much casted in succession. The enemy had no chance to charge through.

While Suo Jia used all his magic power and spirit power to activate a dozen Ice Roars in a row, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had finally recovered completely. Capturing them alive was not very likely anymore. At the very least, this chance wouldn't appear unless they had been worn down after a very long period of time.

Unfortunately for them, Suo Jia wouldn't give the enemy this kind of time. He quickly stuffed the contents of the four colored potions into his mouth, replenishing his own magic power and spirit power. He then shouted, "Don't just stand there, immediately form a hexagram formation around me. We'll charge through together."

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes didn't even think twice about Suo Jia's command, and their bodies subconsciously began to

move, doing whatever Suo Jia had ordered it to. As for what exactly they were doing, they didn't even bother wondering about it,

Soon, the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had formed many hexagram layers around Suo Jia. This meant that the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were split into groups of 6, with each group protecting a single corner to form 6 points. They harmonized and mutually helped with each other, which increased their destructive power by severalfold.

However, this wasn't the greatest trait of this hexagram formation. In reality...it was extremely great at protecting the team members in the center. These people would be able to leisurely activate long-range attacks, also the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' signature move...Thousand Feathers.

The instant the formation came together, the enemy experts closed in once more. With a wave of their weapons, they surrounded the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. But....this time, they weren't so easy to ravage.

Seeing the surrounding enemy make threatening movements, Suo Jia lifted his right hand to activate another Ice Roar. At the same time, he shouted, "Advance at a 45 degree angle. The inner Angelic Phoenixes need to pay attention and activate Thousand Feathers first to open up a path."

The 6 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes near the center area of the hexagram formation all pulled out their amethyst spears and wildly began to gather battle qi. A bright gold and red glow flashed

and six lightning-fast attacks instantly leapt at the direction that Suo Jia had pointed at.

The experts in that direction all waved their weapons against the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' Thousand Feathers, and managed to block it. For a moment, powerful and violent sounds of a series of explosions could be heard.

With the protection of the 30 outer teammates, the inner 6 were the most powerful Angelic Phoenixes that didn't bother to even care about taking potions. Although activating Thousand Feathers hadn't killed a single enemy, it blasted them backwards. Unknowingly, the circle of people was slowly being pushed apart sideways, further and further apart...

Suo Jia sighed in admiration at the predator-like enemies around him. The experts in this world were too many in number. Although their equipments couldn't compare to Dawn's, their strength was too overpowering. Currently, Suo Jia was able to cast over 50 Ice Roars in a row, but he hadn't been able to kill a single enemy. The difference between between the two of them was way too large.

However, the so-called experts just had too little influence on the battlefield. Just these 200 experts definitely weren't enough to seize Dawn. Even if they stood together and attacked as one, they'd probably just exhaust themselves. Dawn Army had more than 100,000 people.

Suo Jia constantly observed his surroundings. He was too familiar with everything going on, after all....this was his territory,

especially as this was the second war during the past few months. He had worked hard every day to organize training practices here, so Suo Jia knew this area so well that he even remembered the location of each rock on the ground.

Faced with the enemy's attacks, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes constantly swapped positions. If they used up all their energy, they'd shift sideways into the center of the formation and recover with the four colored potions, while their teammates would replace their position. Once fully recovered, the person would go to the outside of the formation once more, and the entire hexagram formation would rotate like this.

However, this was only enough to ensure that their strength wouldn't diminish. Breaking through was still too difficult. Although Thousand Feathers was powerful, it couldn't effectively injure or kill these enemy experts.

For a moment, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes couldn't help but begin to fret. The battle had gone on for so long already. Their spirit power, battle qi, willpower, and physical power were still going strong, but their minds were already fatigued. They didn't want to continue fighting any longer.

When they saw the enemy still densely packed around them, they couldn't hide their grimaces. How long would it take for them to charge out? It looked like....that 36v360,000 was really not feasible.

Suo Jia sighed at the sight of everyone's restless expressions. In reality, he had long since planned out how to escape. In addition,

they could've achieved it a while ago. However...Suo Jia had wanted to improve the battle's results, so he hadn't acted. After seeing the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' expressions, Suo Jia decided that he could no longer continue waiting, for the sake of avoiding doubt from forming in their hearts, and for the sake of ensuring they wouldn't become people that hated fighting.

Chapter 231: The End Of The Fight (Part 1)

Suo Jia swept his gaze around, then nodded in satisfaction. If he continued on this way, the enemy might realize...perhaps now was the best time to act.

Suo Jia suddenly stopped his bombardment of magic attacks. He took a deep breath and suddenly rose into the air. After reaching a certain height, his feet lit up, and his body stood straight in a strange position in mid-air. At the same time, his voice powerfully declared, "General Jason, it's time to act."

"Creak, creak....hum..." A bunch of creaking sounds, as well as the sharp whistling of a rain of arrows, shook the earth and the skies. The ear-splitting shriek of 70,000 sharp arrows being shot wasn't something a normal person could imagine.

The enemy automatically raised their heads to look at the sky. Actually, not looking at it might have been better, as now, they were frightened out of their wits. The dense rain of arrows completely covered the sky from view, and that black mass charged down towards the ground.

At that moment, everyone suddenly realized that...at some point, they had already been led on by Suo Jia's group, and entered the gates of Hell: the 300 meter death zone in front of Dawn's walls.

Currently...the enemy was around 250 meters from Dawn. This distance was Dawn Army's greatest shooting range. After being in the air for so long, the force behind the arrows was its greatest. Its

might had increased by at least twofold compared to when it had been shot from 100 meters away.

Faced with incoming death, the enemy experts didn't bother trying to surround the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes anymore. To them, escaping alive was already God's blessing. In that moment, the experts all frantically turned around and leapt towards the opposite direction.

However, was this place really that easy to run away from? The net of arrows that the 70,000 archers had placed already covered 250-300 meters of area. Moreover, the probability of being able to instantly cross 50 meters was 0%. Even the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were unable to do that.

When Suo Jia lifted his head and saw the endless shower of arrows. Suo Jia quickly landed on the ground, and at the same time, without any need for his commands, the 36 girls landed around him. Like flower petals, they surrounded Suo Jia tightly to protect him in the center.

The 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had formed an exceptionally beautiful red and gold flower. As for Suo Jia, he had leisurely closed his eyes as he smelled the girls' fragrance. He didn't know when it had started, but he loved their fresh, clean, and simple scents. He was intoxicated whenever he inhaled it, breathed it.....

Was the arrow shower just a single wave? No, no, no....how could it possibly be that short. Dawn Army's archers always had the same standard: as long as there was still an enemy standing on the

battlefield, they wouldn't stop shooting. Unless the higher-ups gave the command, they were to keep shooting wildly until each enemy was shot down.

This excessive attack method would've definitely been impossible for any other army to follow. However, this was Dawn. Within 3 years, these refined iron arrows could be maintained for free. If they broke, they could be replaced. It was to the point where they could just immediately break them from usage.

In addition, these refined iron arrows couldn't really be broken if they were shot to this extent. Even if they didn't hit a person, they'd end up buried into the ground without any damage. That being the case, why not just shoot them all? It was like training.

After the first wave, Dawn's archers began to fire freely. The air filled with arrows never faded. The area around Suo Jia and the girls was especially well taken care of, since there were nearly 200 enemy experts in their vicinity.

The enemy experts were indeed extremely skilled, at least two times more skilled than the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. However...they didn't have Six-Winged Heavenly clothes; their armors were entirely unable to block the concentrated arrow attacks. They struggled to block the arrows by waving their weapons around for a while, but were finally unable to keep up with the high frequency attacks. The dense storm of arrows shot the enemy down one after another...their bodies were pierced by dozens of refined arrows as they fell to the ground, looking like porcupines.

The surrounding area about a dozen meters around Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes was being controlled by the 10,000 regular slave soldier archers. This was firstly done in order to kill much of the enemy, and secondly so that their accuracy was high enough to avoid hitting the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes as much as possible.

But despite this, the distance between them was still too great. Because the slave archers were currently around 300 meters away, they couldn't maintain their accuracy. If they shot purposely, they might not be able to hit their target. But the more they evaded, the more likely the shower of arrows would hit the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes

Fortunately, the Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes was really very powerful. Aside from the sound of metal clashing on metal, they weren't affected at all. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes only felt like their bodies were standing in a storm. They felt powerful vibrations and shocks, but not much pain. After all...these arrows didn't contain battle qi.

Finally, only 37 figures remained standing within the shooting range. Only then did the slave soldier archers stop in satisfaction. It wasn't because they wanted to let the enemy go, but because those 37 figures were Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes; who would dare to continue shooting?

After sensing that the arrows had stopped, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all relaxed their arms, and Suo Jia's figure was revealed once more. As he looked at the bitter scene around him, he couldn't help but smile. The experts that had been violently

attacking them just now had all become corpses, strewn messily on the area around Suo Jia.

“Whoosh...” Just then, a fierce wind blew, and a corpse on the ground suddenly convulsed. A strong and robust figure quickly jumped out from below the corpse. The figure’s hand flashed dangerously as it stabbed out towards Suo Jia’s abdomen.

Without having anticipated a situation like this, nobody had even had the time to react. On the other hand, the enemy was extremely fast. In an instant, he managed to activate an explosive attack. By the time everyone had realized what was happening, the opposite party’s dagger had already deeply embedded into Suo Jia’s abdomen.

After this scene, the battlefield was completely silent for a moment. Both the distant enemy troops and the Dawn Army soldiers on the city walls were completely stunned. Nobody had imagined that such a theatrical scene would unfold.

“Pfft...” Suo Jia spat out a mouthful of blood towards the sky, the droplets raining down heavily. Trembling, he grabbed onto the other party’s arm and said in pain, “F*ck, who did I provoke? Why did you exert all your strength onto my stomach.”

The black-clothed person stared at Suo Jia in shock, his body shaking as he said, “Why. Why. It shouldn’t be like this, it definitely shouldn’t be like this.”

“Hehe...” With a dark smirk, Suo Jia instantly activated Freezing

Touch through the opposite party's right hand firmly in his grasp. At the same time, he said in a heavy voice, "There aren't that many 'why's'. Do you think I'm a fool? Why would I ever tell you this secret."

Soon afterwards, thick layers of ice quickly condensed around the black-clothed thief's body. This was the effect of Freezing Touch. Even if the target wasn't frozen, they couldn't escape their fate of being sealed by the ice. If they wanted to get out, they'd have to break all of these layers.

Suo Jia loosened his right grip and angrily shouted, "What are you guys still looking at? This bastard hasn't died yet. Drag him back; there are many matters that I need to hear from his mouth."

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes finally returned to their sense. It was only then that they had suddenly remember that... Suo Jia still had a skin-tight Monarch Armor on his body.

The Monarch Armor was crafted from a material even better than the one from the Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes. In addition, the inside of it was lined with Black Dragon scales. It pretty much negated physical and magical attacks. However, as a soft armor, it had no way of blocking the force behind attacks, which was why Suo Jia had spat out blood.

After shattering the ice layers, Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes dragged the black-clothed thief towards Dawn City's walls in front of the thousands of soldiers. They were completely unconcerned about the enemy pursuing them; with Dawn's archer troops, who dared to just wildly charge forwards?

Chapter 232: The End Of The Fight (Part 2)

Suo Jia sat at the main seat in the hall of the city lord's mansion with a fierce expression on his face. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes stood in the room, their faces red with shame. Their heads were lowered as they respectfully listened to Suo Jia's lecture.

Suo Jia swept a glance around and said in a low voice, "What happened. Didn't you all go out to show off? How were you beaten to this point? If I hadn't looked outside on a whim today, do you guys think that you'd still be alive right now?"

Faced with Suo Jia's berating, the girls could only lower their heads further. Their blushes also became brighter. Their consecutive victories so far had made them feel as if they were already unrivaled. It was only today that they suddenly discovered that they were still very lacking. As long as a powerful, long ranged attacker confronted them, they wouldn't be able to charge their way out.

It's true that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes could rise into the air, and even glide. However, if they were attacked in mid-air, they wouldn't have anywhere to borrow energy from, and they would be forced to fall to the ground. Then, they'd be trapped by the enemy encirclement. If the enemy numbers were too high, even a group of ordinary people would be able to hard-press them.

Moreover, they didn't even count as experts yet. There were many people more formidable than them. In reality, they were just using the power of the Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes to just face

things straight on. Without these clothes, they would've died a hundred times, a thousand times over ages ago.

Suo Jia wordlessly looked at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes with very deep emotions. He had never understood this whole time why those so-called experts were never willing to use the aid of outside items, but now he understood. Even if they knew they weren't supposed to be like this, the girls would all unconsciously rely on their clothes during critical moments, and they had regarded it as part of their own personal strength.

Suo Jia coldly looked at the girls in front of him and said heavily, "I've said before that the Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes are your greatest assets, which isn't wrong. But...if you only know how to rely on these clothes, then what successes do you have to speak of."

Suo Jia swept his gaze around and continued, "Duo Mei, tell me why you were all a mess when I saw you girls. You weren't cooperating and assisting each other at all, why couldn't you even maintain the most basic hexagram formation."

Duo Mei raised her head in fear and said timidly, "I'm sorry, Young Master, it was our fault. We had underestimated the enemy too much and we were too careless. With just a small mistake, we were broken up. By the time we had wanted to recreate our formation, it was already too late."

"Hmph." Suo Jia snorted and said, "It's indeed very good that you remember my words. I still keep to my previous point; your equipment is your greatest asset, but...I never said that you were all supposed to fight by relying only on your equipment."

Suo Jia pointed to his head and said angrily, “Wisdom, strategy, tactics, as well as skills and mutual cooperation are the most important. Armor can be relied on but...that’s your final lifeline. Who would rely on their final lifeline to go up against their enemy? If you do that, you won’t be able to do anything to keep your life once that final lifeline breaks.”

Hearing these words, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes’ heads fell even lower. That’s right...today was the most appropriate example. They had relied on their Six-Winged Heavenly Clothes to confront the enemy from the very beginning. Once these clothes were unable to assist them any further, they had already been stranded on the fate of death.

Suo Jia looked at the shamed Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and sighed, “Equipment is just an aid. It can boost your strength, but it shouldn’t become a tool to show off your ability. That’s your survival treasure. Unless your strategy, tactics, skills, and wisdom all prove useless, you shouldn’t have any reason to use the equipment’s aid.”

Suo Jia coldly glared at them, “Alright, I won’t blame you all any further. All of you should go back and properly think it over. Tomorrow morning, you’re all to go out and continue disciplining yourselves until you learn how to use your brain and skills during battle. Until you do that, you will all have to float around outside.”

“Yes sir...” The girls respectfully replied. They all turned around and walked out of the hall. At the same time, Suo Jia shouted, “Duo Mei, stay behind. I have something to say to you.”

Hearing this, Duo Mei abruptly stopped in her tracks, charmingly glancing at Suo Jia. She then obediently turned around and began to walk over to him. At the same time, all the other girls began to leave. In a moment, the hall only had Duo Mei and Suo Jia remaining.

“Hah...” Suo Jia sighed and looked at Duo Mei with a complicated expression. “Oh, you, I didn’t even have the heart to reprimand you in front of everyone else. I had left everyone in your hands, but how had you led them? You almost brought everyone with you to meet Satan.”

Duo Mei bitterly glanced at Suo Jia, and after a moment of silence, she pouted coquettishly, “Alright, I understand now. I promise, this won’t happen again in the future.”

As he helplessly looked at the extremely sweet and charming Duo Mei, Suo Jia bitterly smiled and said, “Big Sister, we’re discussing matters right now. Can you not act like that? I can’t bear it!”

“Ok, ok...” Duo Mei lightly walked up to Suo Jia’s side and began to massage his shoulders. “You’ve already stated it very clearly. Don’t worry, Young Master, I won’t act so dumbly ever again. I’m not just a pretty face; although I admit that my mistakes have been extreme, it won’t happen again.”

“Hmph.” Enjoying Duo Mei’s service, Suo Jia snorted, “Do you really think you won’t make the same mistake again? I think not.”

Duo Mei couldn't help but push Suo Jia in irritation as she retorted, "You, why are you so doubtful? If I said won't do it again, I won't. I've never disappointed you like that before."

Suo Jia smiled and shook his head, "Just like I said before, the current you will definitely make more mistakes. The reality is just like that. You haven't yet realized where exactly you went wrong."

Duo Mei stopped her actions and looked at Suo Jia in confusion, "Didn't you already say what my faults were? I shouldn't have been disorganized and undisciplined, I shouldn't have let the formation break, I shouldn't have relied on equipment, I shouldn't have..."

"Stop." Suo Jia suddenly interrupted Duo Mei's words and looked at her deeply. "Why do you mean you shouldn't have relied on equipment. Under today's circumstances, if you hadn't relied on equipment, you would've died millions of times already. It's true you were wrong in the beginning, but your mistake at the end was the greatest."

Suo Jia's voice gradually grew louder, "Look at you, you're wearing a completely linked equipment set that even an Epic ranked equipment set can't compare to. In addition...you're also wearing a large portion of the Fire Phoenix equipment set. The Fire Phoenix set has 5 items: a crown, necklace, earrings, ring, and bracelet. You already have 4; the only one you're missing is the Fire Phoenix Ring. Yet I didn't think you were much stronger than any of the others on the battlefield."

"That..." Duo Mei couldn't help but fall silent after these words.

That's right...the things she used most often were related to Thousand Feathers. But in reality, after gaining the completely linked equipment set, she had gained countless more abilities. With the addition of the mostly completed Epic-ranked Fire Phoenix equipment set, there was no way she should've ended up like this.

After a long time, Duo Mei innocently said, "Young Master, you can't blame me for that. This whole time, I've been training with everyone else, so I learned the same things as they did. I never had the time to train in anything else."

"Sigh..." Suo Jia helplessly shook his head and bitterly smiled, "This is your greatest fault. You, who possesses a great number of advantages, were still unable to display your superior strength. As the captain, your task is to lead everyone to victory against the enemy. When the others are stuck, you need to lead everyone out of the predicament."

Duo Mei's eyes lit up at Suo Jia's words as she looked at Suo Jia in admiration and said, "I understand, Young Master. What I should be doing is everything you did today, right?"

"That..." Suo Jia was stunned for a moment before he rubbed his head in embarrassment and said, "In general, yes. But I didn't do well enough today either. You have to remember that you not only have to practice with everyone else, you must also allot some time for some self-practice as well. You can only become the most qualified leader if you display the greatest strength of the two equipment sets you have in combination with your omnipotent fire and wind elemental abilities that are talents that occur once

every 10,000 years.”

Suo Jia paused for a bit before continuing firmly, “In reality, if you were just a bit stronger, you would’ve been able to lead everyone out today by yourself. My expectations of you are different from my expectations towards the others; your responsibility is to fully master the two Epic ranked equipment sets on your body and display their maximum formidability.”

At this, Suo Jia became more excited and said, “Duo Mei, under normal circumstances, your task is to command everyone else to victory over the enemy with wisdom and skill, as well as the team’s collective power. But when you are really needed, I hope that you can stand up and meet force with force, and use capricious stubbornness to utilize unyielding methods and overturn the enemy. Use absolute strength to destroy all obstacles. Whenever you act, both deities and fiends alike will be unable to escape. That is what I truly expect of you.”

Chapter 233: Frantic Training (Part 1)

After hearing Suo Jia's words, Duo Mei could only stand there incredulously. She just couldn't dare to believe that Suo Jia's expectations of her were so great. But when she thought about it some more, if she really did display the full strength of the equipments she had, what Suo Jia said would naturally occur.

Suo Jia sighed at Duo Mei's shocked expression and said in a low voice, "Duo Mei, you're different from others. I can tell you right now that members able to enter the Azure Angels group are all intended to help me adventure through the Greater Trade Routes. If one doesn't have extremely powerful strength, then they definitely don't have the qualifications to be there, That's why... you have to work hard."

"Yes..." When she heard 'Greater Trade Routes', Duo Mei's eyes lit up. That place was heaven to warriors. While it was hard to meet an expert here, they could be anywhere on the Greater Trade Routes. Nobody without some level of skill would be able to enter.

Suo Jia waved his hand and said, "Alright, you can leave now. When you go back, think over this carefully. I need you to clearly understand that as the captain of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, you must be absolutely domineering."

Duo Mei wordlessly nodded, then respectfully bid farewell before quickly turning around to leave. Before...she hadn't known how to practice, and had just been with her sisters every day to train in the same things. But after Suo Jia's advice, she had finally understood that as the captain, she had to have her own

specialties.

Seeing Duo Mei's hurriedly leaving figure, Suo Jia quickly shouted behind her, "Oh right, please send over the captive we just caught. I want to personally interrogate him."

Duo Mei nodded and quickly left. The Fire Phoenix equipment set could be put aside, but the Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes was a new type of equipment that was both very effective and skillful. These needed to be slowly tested out. In addition...since she wore two equipment sets at once, there were also the circumstances of mutual relations and impacts between the two. If she didn't spent a lot of time on it, she would probably never know how to use either of them.

Soon afterwards, that black-clothed, masked person was dragged in. Seeing the person's petite figure, but extremely delicate and pretty facial features, Suo Jia couldn't help but smile at the sight of the tight ropes coiled around her body. He inwardly nodded to himself; General Jason had quite a strong awareness of danger.

The delicate and pretty thief glared at Suo Jia while furiously gnashing her teeth. Seeing the little thief's expression, Suo Jia couldn't help but furrow his brows. He just couldn't understand why she hated him so much. Had he done anything offend Heaven and reason?

Suo Jia huffed in annoyance, "Oi, why are you looking at me like, as if I'm your nemesis that killed your father or something? In reality, I don't even recognize you."

The little thief was stunned at first, but then she curled her lips, and looked off to one side in contempt. After Suo Jia's question, she'd suddenly realized that on the battlefield, each person had their own party of concern, so the concept of hate didn't even exist.

Suo Jia looked at the little thief in front of him, and quietly stood up and walked over to her. Hearing the sound of Suo Jia's footsteps, the little thief suddenly turned around and looked up at Suo Jia in terror.

Evilly rubbing his chin, Suo Jia walked around the little thief's body once. After being inspected the little thief said trembling, "You...what are you going to do to me? I'm not afraid of you!"

Seeing that the opposite party was clearly very frightened and still trying to put on a front, Suo Jia couldn't help but laugh out loud. He lightly patted her shoulders, and just as he was about to say something, the little thief sharply cried out, "Ya...remove your filthy hands, don't touch me."

The sharp cry was frighteningly piercing, and the shocked Suo Jia retracted his hand as if he had been electrocuted. The words he was just about to say were instantly forgotten completely.

Dumbfounded, Suo Jia looked at the delicate little thief. He just couldn't fathom how such a small body could make such a clear, ear-piercing shout. It was really too frightening; at such close distance, Suo Jia's eardrums had almost burst.

Suo Jia rubbed his ears and looked thoughtfully at the little thief. Her sharp cry just now had revealed too many things. The other party was wearing thief clothes that hid her identity, However, unless the thief was a small child, there was no way a boy could make such a high-pitched sound.

When Suo Jia examined her closer, he quickly confirmed that she was indeed a young girl. Although she may have been able to conceal it from others, Suo Jia was extremely familiar with body structures, especially female ones. There was no way she could possibly keep this a secret from him.

By using his manipulation over water, Suo Jia instantly figured out her body's composition. This factually proved that the little thief's body wasn't any different from Duo Mei's, she was just slightly more petite in some places and not as large as Duo Mei. But really, how many people had bodies that could compare to Duo Mei's?

Suo Jia quickly understood why the other party didn't want him to touch her. At the same time, he also knew how to force her to speak. Hehe...she didn't want him to touch her? Then he'd just go ahead and do it more.

Suo Jia smiled darkly and used the water to seal his ears. Then, he evilly stretched out his hand to touch the little thief once more. For the sake of verifying his guess, Suo Jia reached out towards the little thief's chest.

“Yah.” The sharp cry rang out again, but Suo Jia had long since prepared for it. Because the water had blocked his ears, there was no way any sound could pass through. That’s why Suo Jia nonchalantly rubbed the little thief’s chest. As expected...just as Suo Jia had anticipated, the feeling he got from underneath his hands was extremely nice, very supple, but also as soft as cotton.

Suo Jia retracted his hand in satisfaction, and unconsciously placed his hand underneath his nose while taking a slight whiff. It was a crisp smell that refreshed the mind and directly penetrated the nose; Suo Jia couldn’t help but breathe deeply.

Seeing Suo Jia act so vulgarly and frivolously, the little thief’s face blushed deeply. She hadn’t imagined that she’d fallen to such a level. If she knew this would happen, she wouldn’t have jumped out to sneak attack him back then, and would’ve just stayed hidden this whole time.

Just as the little thief was thinking this, Suo Jia dispersed the water sealing his ears and said with a spoiled smile, “I have some things I want to ask you about. I hope that you can obediently answer them, ok?”

“Hmph.” With a cold snort, the little thief said in a charming tone, “Stop deluding yourself. Now that I’m in your hands, you can kill me or torture me, but you won’t ever get me to say anything, even in your dreams.”

“Hehe...” With a dark chuckle, Suo Jia begrudgingly said, “Then there’s no way around it. If you aren’t willing to cooperate with me, I’ll just bestow you to the soldiers.”

“You...what do you mean?” The girl subconsciously felt fear from hearing Suo Jia’s words.

“That...” Suo Jia chuckled and said, “You should also know that there isn’t a single girl in Dawn City. The soldiers are all restless with boredom. Now...that I’ve caught a girl, I can naturally hand you over to my brothers to play with. I hope that you can at least last for a little while, and let my brothers enjoy themselves.”

Suo Jia abruptly raised his head and shouted, “Someone, drag this girl out and send her to the slave camp! Tell them that I’m bestowing her to everyone, and they can enjoy her well.”

“No. Don’t...” The little thief’s face immediately paled in horror. She shot a terrified look at Suo Jia, and the little thief fiercely shook her head and said, “I beg of you, please don’t do that. If you have any questions, ask away. I’ll definitely answer you.”

Hearing the little thief concede, Suo Jia nodded in satisfaction and waved his hand to tell the soldiers that had just entered to leave. He then turned back around to the little thief and said, “Alright. In that case, then tell me your name first.”

The little thief hesitated for a bit, but she still answered, “My name is Nicole.”

Suo Jia furrowed his brows and said, “It’s best if you think it through carefully before replying. You can try lying or deceiving me, but if I discover it, I’ll immediately execute the order I just

rescinded. I definitely won't give you any other chances."

The little thief urgently replied, "I've always been called Nicole, I'm telling the truth. You can't go back on your words."

Suo Jia nodded in understanding and smiled, "Alright, I'll believe you for now. But you'd better make sure I don't find out you're tricking me, or else your future will be more miserable than you could possibly imagine."

Nicole couldn't help but tremble at this. When she thought of falling into the hands of those filthy slaves, those evil and dirty hands wandering across her body, she couldn't stop shivering. This was really even more frightening than death.

Suo Jia continued, "Ok, I want to ask you something else. How many experts like the ones that encircled us yesterday do you guys have?"

"That..." After muttering herself for a bit, Nicole firmly replied, "Not that many. Those are Oz City's elite troops, and there are about 1000 of them total. In addition to the Thief Alliance's experts, there should be around 2000 of them."

After interrogating her for over half an hour, Suo Jia ordered for someone to bring Nicole away and properly detain her without mistreating her. After that short interrogation, Suo Jia had come to understand many things. For a while, Suo Jia's stood there with a deep frown.

Chapter 234: Frantic Training (Part 2)

The enemy's side had over 2000 people like yesterday's experts, and that wasn't all. They also had people even more formidable. Just the Thief Alliance alone had nearly 200 of such people. In addition...General Jason's conjecture had already been confirmed; there were indeed enemy troops heading out towards here from the opposite direction, ready to attack at any moment.

As matters stood, just being afraid of this wouldn't get him anywhere. After pondering over this situation for the whole night, Suo Jia finally called in the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. When they saw his grave expression, the girls all knew that Suo Jia had made some kind of important decision again.

Suo Jia declared, "Ok, the reason I called everyone here today was to tell you all that while we successfully killed 200 enemy experts yesterday...the enemy still has 2000 more people like those. In addition...they also have over 200 people that are even more formidable than that."

"Wa?!" The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes couldn't help but cry out in alarm. That was too ridiculous, ridiculous to the point where they couldn't believe it. How could there be so many experts here?

Suo Jia smiled at everyone's doubtful expressions and continued, "In addition, I also wanted to tell everyone that in the near future, the enemy will initiate an attack on us from the other direction. Their total forces number 200,000, and 30,000 of them or so have strengths the same level as yesterday's."

The girls all dropped their jaws open in shock. Only now did they finally truly realize what kind of realm their own strength reached. They were far too lacking, and not even comparable to the enemy elite soldiers' formidability.

Seeing everyone's astonished expressions, Suo Jia continued, "Originally, I had wanted everyone to rest for a few days. However, time doesn't wait, and we don't have any left to waste. From today onwards, all of you are to battle outside the city every day. That's right...your opponents will be those 2000 experts and those 200 powerful masters. You must all raise your strengths as quickly as possible before the war with the enemy from the direction of the border station begins."

Suo Jia quietly turned around to look at Duo Mei and he said, "You're the captain of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, so I hope that you'll properly lead everyone else. I don't want to lose a single sister, so you must take that responsibility, understand?"

"Pa." Duo Mei stepped forwards and solemnly said, "Don't worry, Young Master. No matter what, even if I need to sacrifice my own life, I will protect the safety of all my sisters. If I bring them out, then I must also bring them back to the Young Master."

Suo Jia nodded and replied, "Alright, time is running short, so you should all head out now. Remember closely that while practicing is very important, your lives are more important. If you lose your life, you'll lose all hopes. While you're all diligently practicing, you must also properly protect yourselves, as well as your own companions."

The 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes walked out of the hall one by one. The prologue to their frantic training was about to start. They waited for their enemy, who would definitely attack them non-stop.

Suo Jia stared off into space in the direction that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had disappeared. After hesitating for a long time, he finally stood up. Unless he confirmed that they were alright with his own eyes, he wouldn't be able to relax.

By the time Suo Jia had rushed to the city walls, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had already killed their way through the enemy formation. It was clear to see that the enemy's experts hadn't yet arrived. Thus, the scene before the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes was filled with war blades swinging about, people all over the place, blood flying everywhere, an all-around awe-inspiring sight.

But soon afterwards, the enemy expert group rushed over. They firmly surrounded the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes with 6 layers of people. Suo Jia watched as the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were clearly not as underprepared as they had been yesterday. Although they had been surrounded, they remained organized, and formed their hexagram formation. They then slowly used the Thousand Feathers from the inside of their formation to break open a path that allowed them to charge back to the city walls.

There were still 200 enemy experts present. Even if they had more people, it wouldn't be of any use, as it would just make the area very crowded and hard to display their true might. In an instant, the battle became deadlocked.

Because they had arranged themselves into formation, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were all able to retreat to the inside of the formation to drink potions before they were drained of energy. Their companions behind them that would resist would suffer some difficulties, but they managed to maintain a strong, fortified defense that showed absolutely no signs of disappearing.

Time slowly ticked by. The fierce battle had continued on for nearly an hour, and the enemy experts were finally exhausted of their energy. After the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had taken advantage of this opportunity to burst out and crazily kill over a hundred people, the remaining ones finally fled.

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes recognized that this was the time to stop, so they directly charged out from the enemy ranks and rushed back to the city. Each one of them had bright smiles on their faces. This great victory was enough to relieve a large majority of their pent-up frustrations from yesterday. However... this was obviously not enough. They'd have to continue in the afternoon as well.

After eating lunch, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes impatiently rushed back to the battlefield. They weren't willing to waste a single second. However this time, the enemy had learned their lesson, so all of the experts were sent out. Although only 200 people could encircle the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes at the same time, when the first wave of people had exhausted their energy, they'd immediately retreat and switch with another wave.

Like this, the 2000 experts continued to battle in rotation. The

Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all struggled to withstand them. To the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, it seemed like the enemy was always in their strongest state, and impossible to cut down.

This fierce battle continued until deep in the night. Only then did the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes use the cover of the darkness to successfully escape. After an entire day of fighting, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all felt that they had benefited quite a bit. There was already a world of difference to be seen between their state in the morning and their state in the night.

When they had gone out in the morning, they had still been disorganized from the enemy's attacks and at loss on what to do, stuck in a completely hopeless situation. But after the whole day of intense training had passed, they had become familiar with this kind of situation, and now knew how to deal with the enemy's attacks at any moment. They knew how to shadow each other, how to cooperate with each other, to resist the enemy's attacks.

During the following week, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would leave early and come back late to battle outside the city. This had already become their daily training subject. The fact that they had free experts to train with them was something that they could only ever find here.

Faced with the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' relentless attacks, the enemy had no way of ignoring them, unless they retreated. Otherwise, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' killing power was so frightening that if the experts weren't deployed to stop them, these 36 girls would be able to bring about a large number of casualties.

A week later, the letter that Suo Jia had sent out had finally come back. In light of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' situation, Suo Jia had asked Wen Ya to search and gather a few books regarding the hexagram formation. Suo Jia knew that only this formation would keep the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes firmly stuck together to form a powerful whole.

The hexagram formation was the most powerful formation in the world. It was both the foundation of magic spell arrays, as well as the basics of battle formations. As long one actively used this shape, they'd be able to display peerless might.

Every night, Suo Jia and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would come together to study the formation's subtle functions to try to integrate the shape into real battle and deepen their comprehension. By morning, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would go out to the battlefield and use all the things they learned the previous night. With the addition of the confirmation from various books they consolidated notes on, they slowly began to understand and digest the information.

The six-pointed array was actually a formation that could gather and release energy. After endless experiments, Suo Jia was delighted to discover that this formation wasn't simple at all. According to certain arrangements, it could produce unimaginable effects.

In short, the hexagram had a total of 6 effects which split between the attributes of the six magics: Earth's defense, Water's freezing, Fire's attack, Wind's speed, Light's recovery, and Dark's engulfment.

The most unique part was that the hexagram congregated from the basic origins of the shape could contain everyone's energy. This six-pointed formation would link them all together to form a storage of energy, and as long as this supply wasn't exhausted, all of them would be able to continue attacking.

Chapter 235: Fire Phoenix Equipment Set

(Part 1)

The days passed one by one. Just as Suo Jia had initially planned, the battles had been infinitely extended, becoming battles of attrition. The enemy didn't dare to advance their attack, and Suo Jia didn't dare to either. They only helplessly stood opposite from each other.

However, Suo Jia was happy to maintain this state. Dawn Fort didn't have any income, and running training sessions every day wasn't bad. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' strengths in particular had rapidly progressed almost outrageously. Their boost in energy wasn't that particular, but Suo Jia found their increase in battle experience and basic tactics extremely frightening.

Suo Jia looked downwards at the ground he was flying past, and couldn't help but sigh. His trip out of Dawn City this time was for a huge harvest, and he had completely reached his anticipated objective. This time, Duo Mei's formidability was even more terrifying than before!

A week ago, Suo Jia had hired wyverns from Holy Light City, and left Dawn City with the Light Harmonization Ring to initiate a large amount of transactions with the ten great thief families. With that single ring, he had been able to exchange it for 3 rings!

The Light Harmonization Ring was actually a light elemental ring, and only a Legendary ranked equipment. However...to a thief, it was too precious. When combined with their stealth techniques, they could become forever invisible super assassins.

They were even willing to break into a Black Dragon's lair.

Stealth had its flaws, one being that once attacked, the user's figure would be revealed, and two being that after a certain amount of distance, the stealth wouldn't be maintained, and they needed to change their qi! But the Light Harmonization Ring could allow the thieves to attack with their bodies hidden, and then continue fighting a battle of illusions.

The Light Harmonization Ring's value didn't need any more elaboration. Its preciousness was to the point where even a city was inferior to it. After all, how could the Emperor's most beloved item be trash?

However, the world was just like this. No matter how precious an item was, one could always find another of equivalent value. Suo Jia's trip this time could be said to be a large harvest.

Using the Light Harmonization Ring, Suo Jia first exchanged it for the Fire Phoenix Ring. After obtaining this ring, Duo Mei had gathered the entire peak grade Epic ranked equipment set: Fire Phoenix equipment set, in addition to her Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes. Suo Jia was extremely curious as to what would happen after completing this Epic ranked equipment set.

Strictly speaking, the Fire Phoenix Ring alone could already rival the Light Harmonization Ring. Although in terms of value, it was a bit lacking, but this was definitely worthwhile transaction to Suo Jia. However...Suo Jia would never make a transaction that would result in his loss. If he exchanged it like this, anyone would think Suo Jia was at a disadvantage.

Suo Jia obviously wouldn't suffer from losses. Aside from the Fire Phoenix Ring, he also got a Legendary ranked ring: Concealment Ring!

There were many rings in this world, at least 100, that could help a person conceal their bodies. But this Concealment Ring was the most unique out of all of them.

The typical stealth was restricted by speed. Under the stealth state, one's speed was extremely slow; the moment one tried to go fast, they would be unable to continue concealing their body. But the Concealment Ring could hide the body under high speeds. This was too significant. Although the Concealment Ring was not unrivaled, only 3 or so rings in terms of value could be found in the entire world.

The Concealment Ring could not only maintain invisibility under fast speeds, it could also maintain it for a maximum of 12 seconds, and didn't have an activation limit. Under the concealed state, the user would be both invisible and their sound of movement would be negated, as well as even the scent of their bodies. This was basically the concealment technique used by this legendary ring.

This ring combined with Suo Jia's Rising Wave Steps, Suo Jia's survival ability on the battlefield substantially improved. "Rapid change" alone wasn't enough to describe it.

As he was thinking this, the wyvern abruptly swooped down. When Suo Jia looked down, he saw that the previously matchbox-

sized Dawn City was now quickly growing large. In an instant, Suo Jia was astonished to discover that the wyvern had already landed on the ground.

“Pa!” Holy Light’s Dragon Knight stood on the wyvern, and after paying his respects, declared loudly, “Does Viscount Suo Jia have any other matters to request of me? If not, I will rush back to Holy Light now to make my report!”

Suo Jia took out a crystal card with a smile and said, “There’s nothing else. This is just a small token for me, use it to go out and buy some drinks. Count it as me thanking you for your help this week.”

The Dragon Knight’s eyes lit up at the sight of Suo Jia passing over the crystal card. After declining it a few times, he finally accepted it in the end. With so much money in question, even the Dragon Knight couldn’t resist the temptation.

Suo Jia rubbed the ring on his finger and turned around in satisfaction, heading towards the city lord’s mansion. General Jason, who had been waiting for him in the distance, met up with Suo Jia, and the two headed to the mansion together as Jason summarized everything that happened while Suo Jia had been gone.

Because Suo Jia’s leave had been secret, the battlefield hadn’t changed at all. Everyone was still deadlocked, and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes continued to train every day. Nothing had changed.

Although he wanted to immediately summon Duo Mei to test the Fire Phoenix equipment set's effects, Suo Jia knew that there was no need to rush it. He'd wait until they returned at night.

When Suo Jia arrived at the city walls, he glanced around and saw the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes currently fighting in a frenzy. During the past few months, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had already become unstoppable. Even if they were surrounded by 200 experts, they could come and go as they pleased, leading the enemy encirclement everywhere they went as they roamed about within the enemy ranks.

What made Suo Jia really sigh in praise was the fact that no matter how fast they ran around, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would always maintain their formation. This training had been drilled into their blood, and they had already memorized the formation's changes as well. According to their companions' position changes, they'd immediately understand the entire formation's state, and automatically adjust their own position appropriately to conform.

Finally...night fell. All the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes returned back to Dawn City in exhaustion. They had fought for an entire day. Although their spirit power, physical strength, and battle qi were recovered with the potions, their mental exhaustion wasn't curable. However, they all understood that they had to endure it if they wanted to become masters.

As soon as she returned to the city, Duo Mei received a message. Hearing the news, she immediately gave some orders to her sisters,

then ran towards the city lord's mansion at full speed. She hadn't seen Suo Jia for over a week, and really missed him.

The moment she entered the mansion, Duo Mei saw the smiling Suo Jia, and after a happy cry, she bounded over into Suo Jia's embrace...

Theoretically speaking, she was actually the one that embraced Suo Jia. Although he was already over 13 years old, Suo Jia's height hadn't changed, and he only reached up to Duo Mei's chest. For a moment, Suo Jia only felt two round and supple mounds firmly rubbed against his face. A strong aroma mixed with Duo Mei's sweat flooded his nose.

Suo Jia shifted his face comfortably and moved closer to Duo Mei as he subconsciously yearned to feel more of Duo Mei's treasures. For a moment, the two remained in a tight embrace, without moving or speaking.

After a long time, Duo Mei's emotions finally calmed down. She let go of Suo Jia and gazed deeply at him and inwardly gave a bitter laugh; she didn't know when it had started, but Suo Jia was already deeply rooted in her heart. Now, even a single day passing without seeing him made her feel empty inside. When she had hugged him tightly, her incomparable satisfaction and happiness almost made her lose her bearings.

Suo Jia also returned his senses. He smiled as he took out an embroidered case from his pocket and said with a mysterious smile, "Duo Mei, I went out this time to find a treasure for you. Why don't you guess what's inside the box?"

Duo Mei gave Suo Jia a bewildered look. She had never thought that Suo Jia's trip would've been for her sake. This made a feeling of happiness quietly fill Duo Mei's heart.

She didn't bother guessing, and directly reached out to grab the box in Suo Jia's hand. She happily opened it up, and...a pair of glowing, red rings were nestled within the box appeared in front of her eyes.

Chapter 236: Fire Phoenix Equipment Set

(Part 2)

When she first saw these rings, Duo Mei only felt shock. Then, her face flushed a bright red as she shot Suo Jia a strange look as Duo Mei inwardly tried to guess why the Young Master had suddenly gifted her a ring. In addition, it was a pair. Could it be... that he wanted to propose to her? But wasn't he a bit too young?

Duo Mei returned the rings to Suo Jia with a blush on her face and said in embarrassment, "Young Master, Duo Mei understands your feelings towards her. Don't worry, Duo Mei will be yours sooner or later. However...being together...right now...is a bit early, isn't it?"

"Eh!" Suo Jia was stunned by Duo Mei's words. After thinking it over for a long time, he finally realized what was going on, and couldn't help but laugh out loud.

As he gasped for breath, Suo Jia said, "Duo Mei, what are you thinking? These aren't marriage rings; this pair of rings is a part of the Fire Phoenix equipment set!"

"Ack..." Duo Mei couldn't hold back her strangled cry as she heard this. Her gaze landed on that pair of rings. This was too unbelievable; how had Young Master done it? He had managed to gather an entire Epic ranked equipment set so quickly!

Duo Mei accepted the rings again with trembling hands, and impatiently placed them on her left and right ring fingers.

Afterwards...she stretched both hands out to inspect both of them closely. For some reason, she felt some disappointment in her heart; why was that? What could she possibly feel depressed about after receiving this pair of Fire Phoenix rings?

Suo Jia urged, “Quick...Duo Mei, feel around and see exactly what changes you can feel after completing the Fire Phoenix equipment set.

With a start, Duo Mei quickly regained her senses, and she shot Suo Jia a complicated look. She knew that the reason she was disappointed was because these rings weren't for a marriage proposal. Although she wasn't able to accept one at the moment anyways, she actually deeply wished for Suo Jia to gift her a marriage ring.

She shook her head to clear these thoughts away, then carefully checked the Fire Phoenix equipment set on her body. In reality, the effects of this set were recorded very clearly in the historical records; all she needed to do now was to sense it and then activate it.

She closed her eyes, and closely felt around. After a long time, Duo Mei suddenly opened her eyes. At the same time, a red glow surrounded her body, and countless flame-like glows began to burn intensely.

The part of their set that looked like six wings opened up with the impetus from the red glow, like a phoenix's wings. After a slight flap, Duo Mei's entire body had become completely surrounded by the scarlet glow.

Duo Mei looked excitedly at Suo Jia and said in a trembling voice, “Young Master, the records are indeed correct. This Fire Phoenix equipment set not only quadruples my fire and wind elemental battle training speeds, it more importantly bestows me great attack power, as well as incomparable speed. The battle skill that comes with it is Bright Southern Phoenix Slash, which strikes with a 10 meter long, phoenix-shaped wave of battle qi. High temperature and speed can quadruple this attack’s might!”

The six wings behind Duo Mei began to flap, and her feet slowly left the ground. At the same time, she said, “In addition...the flying ability that this equipment set gives allows me to continue moving around in the air like a phoenix until my wind and fire elemental battle qi are exhausted!”

Suo Jia wordlessly shook his head. Although Duo Mei was extremely excited, Suo Jia was quite disappointed. These effects didn’t seem as formidable as he had imagined for an Epic ranked equipment set. The exact details of the effects would have to be slowly examined; Suo Jia deeply believed that there had to be many secrets that the historical records hadn’t noted.

Duo Mei dispersed the flames on her body and said to Suo Jia with a smile, “The Fire Phoenix equipment set has a total of two states: the first is the attack state, the other is the auxiliary state. The attack state is completely meant for battle, while the auxiliary state is meant for supplementary training, and increases training speed.”

Suo Jia nodded; he knew of this characteristic. Under normal

circumstances, the Fire Phoenix equipment set would be in its auxiliary state to increase the user's training in fire and wind battle qi. In its attack state, it would display all its might and destructive ability.

Suo Jia sighed in praise and shook his head. In reality, the Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes already doubled Duo Mei's training speed. With the addition of the quadrupling effects from the Fire Phoenix set, Duo Mei's future development would have to be described as frightening.

Suo Jia knew that this period of time was the most crucial. Before Duo Mei truly became formidable, she had to develop good habits. Otherwise, she'd regret it later.

The future Duo Mei would definitely have far superior and domineering, destructive attacks and speed. Just the explosiveness of the attacks and the gale-like speed was enough to make her unrivaled. But if she really wanted to rely on just these two points, she'd never become a peak level expert.

Right now, Duo Mei's abilities were still shallow, and her speed wasn't really at the abnormal level. She needed to get into the habit of using battle skills, her mind, and strategic tactics, as well as her companions' teamwork, to truly pave the way of the King!

Suo Jia raised his head and looked at Duo Mei earnestly, "Duo Mei, although you've already completely gathered two entire Epic ranked equipment sets, to the point where a single display of your might would be enough to make even the gods and devils flee...I don't want you to become a soldier that only knows how to rely on

brute force and speed.”

Duo Mei looked faithfully at Suo Jia and said resolutely, “Just command me directly, Young Master. No matter what, I’ll definitely listen to your orders, because...you’ve never been wrong. I believe in you!”

Suo Jia smiled and nodded, and said gratefully, “I’m really too happy just hearing you say that. For the sake of helping you become a true expert, I’ll have your Fire Phoenix equipment set sealed from now on!”

“What?” Duo Mei cried out in shock. She didn’t understand why Suo Jia was doing such a thing. Didn’t he say before that the equipment set was her greatest asset to rely on?

Suo Jia patiently explained, “Don’t worry, it’s just to prevent you from using it however you please. You can practice as much as you want; the Fire Phoenix equipment set will be a secret between the two of us, and will become your ultimate skill. Unless you’re in a critical situation, you can only secretly practice with it. You definitely must not activate it casually!”

Duo Mei frowned and looked at Suo Jia in confusion, “Young Master, you mean to say that I should only display the power of the Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes under normal circumstances, and not the Fire Phoenix equipment set’s?”

Suo Jia affirmed, “That’s right, that’s what I mean. The matter of the Fire Phoenix equipment set is something only the two of us

know. I don't want anyone outside to know of it. As your final lifeline, how can we let others know of its existence?"

"Pa!" Duo Mei suddenly facepalmed and said with bright eyes, "I understand, Young Master. This is my ultimate move, something I can only use in the most critical moments, a life-saving skill. If the enemy knows of it beforehand, they'll definitely defend against it, and then my final lifeline will be useless."

"Hehe..." Suo Jia nodded and smiled, "That's exactly what I mean. Under normal circumstances, using your completely linked Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes should be enough. Once you activate the Fire Phoenix equipment set, your strength will instantly be quadrupled. Your attacks will be overpowering, your speed like you're flying. If the enemy is unprepared for it, they'll definitely be killed with a single attack!"

"Yes..." Duo Mei nodded furiously and said in excitement, "Alright, I'll do as Young Master said. This Fire Phoenix equipment set is the greatest secret between the two of us, and nobody else is to know of it."

Suo Jia nodded with a smile and said lovingly, "Ok, ok, after you go back, remember to seize every moment to practice. Let's stop here for today; you've also exhausted yourself today, so you should go back quickly and rest."

Duo Mei walked up to Suo Jia as usual, then she kissed Suo Jia's face deeply. Satisfied, she turned around to leave. As Suo Jia watched her leave, he couldn't help but rub his face, completely at loss. Why was his heart beating so quickly? Was he...sick?

Chapter 237: Pet Evolution Set (Part 1)

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes continued to frantically train throughout the entire month. They went out early every morning and came back late, so their strength improved so quickly that the enemy outside the city walls had finally become alerted to it. Throughout their whole lives, they had never seen a person improve at such a speed; it was really too terrifying.

The real reason the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes could improve so quickly was firstly because they had been diligently training, and secondly because the Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Clothes were Epic ranked equipment sets that could double their cultivation speed of fire and wind battle qi. In addition...with the supplement from the four colored potions, their battle qi was used extremely often. Naturally, the more it was used, the more it would increase.

Meanwhile, Suo Jia wasn't idling around either. With the help of the Atlantis crown, he was able to subconsciously enter the meditation state as he trained in the Ice and Snow Pact to lower the temperature of his ice elemental magics.

Suo Jia's advancement speed was something that nobody else could compare to. Putting aside the supplementary effects from the Atlantis equipment set, just the fact that it could keep Suo Jia in the meditation state 24/7 made him far superior to others.

Moreover, the addition of Faerie's Soul and Frost's Sigh, which were Legendary ranked equipments, Suo Jia's training speed could only be described as frightening.

More importantly, with the assistance of the Atlantis glove, Suo Jia's training in the contract with the ice spirits was several times higher than any other person's level in it! In addition, he also had the impossibly difficult level of magic power that other users could only dream of!

Of course, while Suo Jia was subconsciously meditating and training, he wasn't just wasting his time either. He concentrated all his attention in researching the alchemic materials collected from the Atomic Alchemy Labs. Aside from very important matters, Suo Jia never bothered with the battles going on outside.

When a person focused their attention on a single thing, there was no reason for them not to do well. As long as they concentrated and put enough effort into it, they'd definitely be able to achieve their desired results.

Suo Jia was also like this. In the 24 hours of a day, Suo Jia would spend 6 hours absorbing experience from meditation, and the other 18 hours digesting materials from reading. When he was tired, he drank the Endurance Potions, Spirit Potions, and then continued to observe, test, and take notes.

He had obtained many books from the Atomic Alchemy Labs and nearly all of them were one-of-a-kind that couldn't be found elsewhere. Moreover...how could the books stored in the Atomic Alchemy Labs be average books?

Among the thousands of books, Suo Jia had taken out the most

precious one; the alchemy notes written by the mightiest alchemist: Chris. These notes recorded all his knowledge of alchemy from his experiences, and the information that he had grasped. After a simple comparison, Suo Jia discovered that notes taken from all the thousands of books here were recorded in this one volume, combining to form one complete, comprehensive compilation of the subject of alchemy.

Studying day and night, Suo Jia's improvement speed could only be described as rapid progress when taking his previous foundation into account. That's why, Suo Jia quickly grew familiar with many core techniques.

Suo Jia's first job was to add a spirit mark to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' amethyst spears. After that, they would be able to use the energy from the spears, and according to the spirit marks, they'd be able to automatically return to their owners.

Of course, the spirit marks alone were definitely not enough. If the amethyst spears were blocked by stones or other solid objects, it wouldn't be able to automatically return. That's why...aside from the spirit marks, Suo Jia had also added an Interspatial Channel array on the amethyst spears.

The Interspatial Channel was a summoning type elementary magic. The principle behind it wasn't very clear, but it could form an interspatial pathway that could call upon life forms or inanimate objects to pass through it, thus bypassing any obstructions.

As the most elementary summoning type magic, the Interspatial

Channel didn't have any power to speak of. It was a magic that all summoning mages had to learn, or else they wouldn't be able to summon anything at all. In addition...the more powerful the summoning mage was, the larger the diameter of the Interspatial Channel would be. It was said that...peak level summoning mages could create Interspatial Channels over dozens of meters in diameter, and could even summon a Black Dragon King. Of course...this was just a legend.

After these improvements, the amethyst spears were able to automatically return to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' waists three seconds after hitting their target. Although the Interspatial Channel arrays could only open passageways that were 5 cm in diameter, it was enough for these amethyst spears to pass through.

That wasn't all. In order to strengthen its destructive abilities, Suo Jia also carved two other arrays onto the spears. As for which two arrays these were...what else could they be? Obviously these were two of the 5 great auxiliary magics that Suo Jia exclusively used.

Acceleration Drive: thought system magic that used one's thoughts to increase the magic's advancement speed and accelerated the rate at which the magic travels through the air!

Berserk Impact: control system magic that used one's manipulation over the elements to boost the magic's force of impact. This made the magic attack more explosive, and more destructive to the enemy!

Also, Suo Jia carved the wind elemental archers' Meteor Arrow

array onto the amethyst spears. The Meteor Arrow increased shooting range. Like this, the completed version of the Thousand Feathers finally came into being!

After Suo Jia's improvements, the spears not only automatically returned to their owners, but even more frighteningly, had doubled in speed thanks to the Acceleration Drive. Their explosiveness and amount of induced force upon impact had also doubled thanks to Berserk Impact. Even the shooting range had been doubled due to the help of the Meteor Arrow.

After obtaining the spears, the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes forced all the enemies in front of the city walls back a kilometer as they tried to evade the wild bursts of Thousand Feathers. As the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes grew stronger, the addition of the spears' improvements increased their shooting range to a massive value of 400 meters! With the protection of Dawn's arrow showers, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes could completely destroy everything within a 700 meter distance outside the city.

Suo Jia was now filled with confidence. Although there were still many alchemy books he hadn't read, Suo Jia knew that the current him was already not inferior to any other alchemist. He could already achieve things stated in legends.

The next thing Suo Jia needed to do was production. That's right...quite simply, learning originated from copying, so Suo Jia wanted to replicate the Fire Phoenix equipment set!

Of course, Suo Jia didn't hope to completely reproduce it. However...as long as he could replicate half of its effects, it would

be enough to help the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes double their training speed even more, thus also increasing their battle strength by twofold.

Suo Jia retrieved the Fire Phoenix equipment set from Duo Mei, and began to furiously research them. After studying it, Suo Jia finally understood exactly how formidable this Epic ranked equipment set was. It was clearly something that had gone extinct.

The most important part of an Epic ranked equipment set was its materials. For example, all parts of the Fire Phoenix equipment set were made from various parts of an actual Phoenix. Suo Jia didn't dare try to imagine how these materials were obtained. Unless... Phoenixes really existed in this world?

After considering it for a bit, Suo Jia soon realized that...if even Black Dragons and Great Frost Wyrms existed, how could Phoenixes be rare? However, they seemed to be extinct now.

The Epic ranked equipment set had such powerful effects on training because the materials it was made from all originated from the world's most powerful creatures. Thus, its effects on magic absorbance and gathering were naturally traits that other materials couldn't compare to.

Aside from the materials, the Epic ranked equipment set had overlaying magic arrays that were pretty extreme. A single glance was enough to discern that the jewelry were all filled with decorative designs on their surfaces. And if one looked more closely, they'd see that each design combined to form spell arrays so detailed that Suo Jia really couldn't figure out how they were

carved. The veined lines were even thinner than a strand of hair.

In reality, it was all pretty simple. First was the materials, and second was the carvings and overlaying of arrays. These were Suo Jia's two greatest problems.

Of course, the Epic ranked equipment set wasn't actually that simple. How were the spell arrays supposed to be compatible with each other? How could he link them together so that they excited each other? These were the greatest questions, as complicated and difficult to understand as the circuitry of electronics. Suo Jia didn't comprehend these at all. But fortunately, Suo Jia had the Fire Phoenix equipment set to copy off from, so he didn't need to think too much about it.

The first thing to choose was the materials. Suo Jia knew well that if he wanted to make an equipment set like the Fire Phoenix set and use parts of the Fire Phoenix's body, it was absolutely impossible. Where was he supposed to go capture 36 Phoenixes?

Besides, he needed to make a batch of copies, so those rare materials weren't considered. But common materials weren't really of any use, so exactly what was he supposed to do?

After flipping and searching through the books for many days, Suo Jia found the most suitable materials amidst the sea of books: 10,000 year old Paulownia wood. These were quite uncommon, and also fulfilled Suo Jia's requirements. The Phoenix lived for very long periods of time, so the 10,000 year old Paulownia wood carried the ambience and the unique traits of the Phoenix. At the very least, it could substitute half a Phoenix!

Suo Jia knew that only one 10,000 year old Paulownia wood existed, and there was no need to go search for it. Actually, it was within Suo Jia's interspatial ring as one of the hidden, precious materials from the Atomic Alchemy Labs.

Of course, just the Paulownia wood wasn't enough at all. He also had to fit it with rubies and topaz to actually bring out its use. Fortunately...although these two gemstones were extremely expensive, they weren't uncommon. As long as one had the money, anyone would be able to purchase them. Most importantly, as common materials, the Atomic Alchemy Labs still had some in its storage.

During the following days, Suo Jia began to concentrate entirely on copying the Fire Phoenix equipment set. He used the 10,000 year old Paulownia as the foundation, and embedded rubies and topaz on it. He also carved out spell arrays on the gemstones and the wood. With that, everything had finished. Reproducing something was never too hard, the difficulty laid in reproducing it well.

Copying didn't require any further research, nor did he have to comprehend it. Just doing it without understanding was enough. Although he didn't understand the principles behind it, he could successfully create it. The issue was the differences in abilities.

A month later, Suo Jia handed the 35 Fire Phoenix equipment set replicas to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. After many tests, they discovered that these replicas had about 60% of the Fire Phoenix completely linked equipment sets' effects, and could

double their training speeds and battle strength! The most shocking part was that even the unique traits and battle skills that the Fire Phoenix equipment set contained were all present; they were just barely amplified, and they couldn't compare to the real Fire Phoenix equipment sets.

Chapter 238: Pet Evolution Set (Part 2)

After completing this work, Suo Jia finally sighed in relief. Now, he had finally completed the equipment sets for the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. Although this wasn't necessarily the strongest equipment they could have, Suo Jia wouldn't spend any more energy on them for the time being. Now, everyone had collected two equipment sets each, but Suo Jia hadn't even completed one. That wouldn't do.

With the Fire Phoenix equipment set replicas, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were even more powerful. However...Suo Jia stuck by his previous words; they weren't to activate the equipment sets unless at critical moments. These equipments sets were most helpful in boosting training speed. Unless they had no other alternative, they weren't to change their battle methods.

Of course, in order for everyone to familiarize themselves with the Fire Phoenix imitation sets, everyone normally gathered to train together. If it was just that, they could activate them. If they never used it, Suo Jia was afraid that everyone wouldn't be able to get used to the abrupt rise in strength when they did suddenly use it.

After the alchemy matters were dealt with, Suo Jia took out the alchemy furnace and prepared to begin making potions again. Although the stock of the four colored potions still had quite a bit remaining, Enchanted Zhiyao's effects also boosted his magic power and spirit power by a substantial amount, faster than meditation. The only thing was...meditation also deepened one's comprehension and communication with the elements, while Enchanted Zhiyao couldn't.

After properly placing the alchemy furnace down, Suo Jia opened his interspatial ring, planning to pull out the Great Frost Wurm icy core as he normally did to use as a cold-condensing medium. But after opening his interspatial ring, a large, blue guy came out instead.

Suo Jia looked in shock at the large blue dragon that now had a body 1.5 meters tall and incomparably tall and solid. It had a pair of massive wings, and a pair of arched backwards, long and pointy horns. Suo Jia was absolutely stupefied; what the heck was that? Was this his little pet?

The little Frost Wurm abruptly opened its eyes, and after giving Suo Jia a frightened look, it hurriedly reached out with its front claws to grab the blue object and toss it into its mouth. After a loud chomp and sudden swallow, an expression of bliss appeared on its face.

“That...” Suo Jia had clearly seen that the thing it had thrown into its mouth was the icy core, which had shrunk to the size of a longan. As Suo Jia watched the little Frost Wurm chew the core in its large mouth and then swallow it down, his face instantly paled. He was screwed...the Great Frost Wurm’s core had been eaten!

The little Frost Wurm suddenly closed its eyes, and its body began to emit a freezing air. At the same time, the little Frost Wurm’s body began to swell up like a balloon at a rate at which the naked eye could follow.

The little Frost Wyrms grew from 1.5m to 2m in height before finally stopping. When Suo Jia looked at the incomparably thick and solid pet that was now taller than him by two heads, Suo Jia was completely stunned. Judging from its current state, this little pet had already entered the final phase of the adolescent stage!

The Great Frost Wyrms' newborn state lasted 10 years, and the adolescent state required 100 years. But just now, when Suo Jia retrieved the little Frost Wyrms from his ring, the little pet seemed to have broken through the middle phase of the adolescent state. Afterwards...Suo Jia watched the little pet swallow the icy core, and break through the adolescent state's final phase! In only a year, the little Frost Wyrms had skipped over 100 years of time and successfully entered the last phase of the adolescent stage!

According to the records, the Great Frost Wyrms would have the ability to fly after the later stages of the adolescent period, but still couldn't carry people. Most importantly, its strength had already reached the peak of middle level magical beast, and the lowest point of high level magical beasts.

Since the icy core had already been digested by the little pet, there was no way Suo Jia could continue the Enchanted Zhiyao process. Suo Jia brought the little Frost Wyrms with him and rushed towards the city walls. He wanted to personally confirm whether the little Frost Wyrms' might was as great as the legends said it was.

Although its body was only 2 meters tall, the little Frost Wyrms' wings were quite sizable already, reaching a span of 6 meters, and the wings were both wide and thick. But when thinking about how

the wings had to lift up such a heavy, solid body into the air, how could they not be large?

Following closely behind Suo Jia, the two of them quickly reached the front of the city walls. When the slave soldiers saw the strange little pet, they couldn't help but try to guess, what in the world was it? Why did it look like a dragon? But what kind of dragon was blue in color? Unless it was...

While everyone else was still guessing, General Jason charged over in shock to stare incredulously at the little Frost Wurm. He asked in disbelief, "City Lord, this...is this your pet?!"

"Hehe..." Suo Jia rubbed his nose and nodded, "That's right, this is my pet: the Great Frost Wurm. However...I call it 'little pet'."

"That..." General Jason couldn't help but break out in sweat, "That...City Lord, that no longer counts as 'small'. I don't really understand, how did your dragon grow so quickly?"

Suo Jia glanced at General Jason and bitterly smiled, "I don't know either. However...it's been hugging that Great Frost Wurm icy core since it was small. Just now, it even swallowed it in a single gulp. That's why it became so large."

"Gasp!" Jason sharply inhaled and said in praise, "That's about right. The fastest way for pets to mature is for them to eat magic cores from magical beasts of the same type with the similar traits. That will allow it to directly evolve into its full form. However...completely absorbing and digesting all that energy will require

quite a bit more time.”

“What?” Suo Jia exclaimed in shock, “Do you mean to say that the little pet hasn’t yet completely digested all of the icy core? How is that possible?”

General Jason glanced at Suo Jia and firmly said, “I’m absolutely certain. After all...there are 5000 pets in this army. I can’t possibly get that wrong. Magic cores can contain about 80% of a magical beast’s energy. If your pet manages to absorb all of it, it would already become a thousand year dragon. How would it possibly maintain its adolescent form in that case?

Jason paused for a moment before continuing, “Right now, it’s digesting the icy core, and hasn’t absorbed it yet. It will probably take ten years before it successfully digests all the energy within it.”

General Jason said to Suo Jia in a tone of admiration: “In other words, ten years from now, you will become the first Epic-ranked hero in history to have a Great Frost Wyrms as a pet. Just that alone will make you unrivaled in the entire world!”

Chapter 239: Awesome Might Of The Ice Dragon (Part 1)

Suo Jia couldn't contain his great excitement when he heard General Jason's words. Abruptly turning around, Suo Jia said to the little Frost Wyrms, "Alright, now...let me see your strength. Go outside and tear them all apart!"

The little Frost Wyrms tilted their heads at Suo Jia's words and looked outside the city. The next moment...their eyes suddenly lit up. The groups locked in an intense battle instantly drew their attention.

The Great Frost Wyrms were undoubtedly a merciless and tyrannical creature that had a fight-loving nature. It was classified as a barbarous magical beast that killed easily. No creature could possibly exist in its vicinity.

In reality, the reason why the Great Frost Wyrms were so powerful was precisely because their newborn and adolescent forms lasted too long. In addition, their strength during these periods was too weak; if they continued to live in such frail bodies, what kind of fights did they have to experience? The reason the Great Frost Wyrms were unrivaled was because of their ridiculously plentiful battle experience.

After so many generations, battles had already become part of a Great Frost Wyrms' instincts. Any creatures that approached it would be ruthlessly killed. If they didn't stay this vigilant, how would they survive for 10,000 years?

Suo Jia and Jason watched as the little Frost Wyrmling channeled some berserk and powerful magic power through its body. The next instant...a series of crackling sounds rang through the air as pieces of Glacial Armor gradually stretched out from its body in succession.

First was its torso and wings. Like a machine, they were quickly covered with thick ice layers. Following that were its limbs, and finally its claws and feet. Judging by its slowly extending, unfathomably sharp and large ice claws, one could tell that these were absolutely not inferior to any Divine weapons in terms of sharpness!

Once everything was completed, the little Frost Wyrmling's original body was completely covered by the solid Glacial Armor, making it look like a piece of amber, completely sealed by the ice.

From the distance, it looked like a large, dragon ice sculpture. The little Frost Wyrmling's two meter tall body had become over three meters tall. The next moment...Suo Jia and the others watched as the little Frost Wyrmling suddenly jumped off from the city walls.

“Rumble!” A dull sound rang out as the little Frost Wyrmling's large body violently smashed into the ground below the city walls, causing the earth and mountains to quake. The little guy nonchalantly shook its head, then stood with its legs apart, opened its wings, and quickly charged towards the battle.

General Jason sighed in praise as he looked at the little dragon's back, “Did you see that, City Lord? That's the origin of the Diamond Dragon's name. As its strength increases, its Glacial

Armor's ice layers get thicker and sturdier. That's an armor that no attack can break through!"

"Heavens!" Although he had known that the Great Frost Wurm's other name was Diamond Dragon, Suo Jia had never really understood why. Now that he suddenly saw the little Frost Wurm's transformation and heard General Jason's explanation, Suo Jia finally came to a realization.

The Great Frost Wurm definitely wasn't the only magical beast that could summon the Glacial Armor. However...it was the only one that could call upon such a thick one. That guy's armor...was already over half a meter thick, and couldn't even be called the Glacial Armor anymore; it was more like an ice pillbox!

In terms of outer appearance, it was still in the Great Frost Wurm state. But its volumetric size had increased by 50%. It was taller by one meter, and thicker by one meter as well. Now it had a three meter tall and incomparably thick and solid body. As he stared at the .5 meter thick Glacial Armor, Suo Jia tried and failed to imagine what kind of thing could possibly pierce through it, and harm the little Frost Wurm within.

The little Frost Wurm had already reached an amazing speed, and charged straight towards the enemy troops. When it was about 100 meters away, the little Frost Wurm suddenly opened both wings. Its body flashed with a cold light, and the front edge of its wings became as sharp as a blade's edge. At the same time, the dragon's feet quickly tread across the ground, allowing its thick and solid body to carry an unimaginable force. It instantly leapt forwards.

Everyone watched as the little Frost Wyrms pair of wings instantly sliced apart the enemy like the Grim Reaper's scythe. With the impulse behind its attacks, it pressed forward to attack the enemy ranks.

A harvester. That's right...as he watched the little Frost Wyrms, all Suo Jia could think of was a harvester. The dragon was clearly not fazed by the people at all. It harvested their lives just like one harvested grass, easily and cheerfully.

When the little Frost Wyrms force was gradually negated by the enemy's attacks, its wings suddenly flapped downwards, sending its body into the air. Right afterwards, its wings comfortably laid straight down along both sides of its back, and its body flew straight upwards like an airplane taking off.

Seeing the little Frost Wyrms take off, the archers on the ground opened fire. Countless arrows flew at the dragon in midair like a storm...

"Ding dong..." A chain of sounds rang out. The little Frost Wyrms had completely ignored the arrows. Although as archers, their attacks had a certain level of penetrative ability, the force behind their attacks was too low, and they were absolutely no match for the dragon. Those .5m thick ice layers weren't something such puny arrows could break through.

Soon...the little Frost Wyrms body had reached a sizeable height and...the wings behind it suddenly opened wide. The dragon's body miraculously froze 10 meters in the air. Seeing this scene, Suo Jia's eyes lit up. Hehe...wasn't that the theory behind the Wave

Walking? He hadn't imagined that it would be from the Great Frost Wurm's body. Despite having such an extremely enormous body, it could stop right where it wanted to! This completely defied the laws of physics.

The little Frost Wurm initiated its attack. Its body shook slightly, and then it suddenly opened its jaws. Aimed at the enemy 10 meters below it, it fiercely began shooting something out of its mouth.

“Whoosh...” A strong humming noise rang through the air as boundless white mist instantly sprayed out of the dragon's mouth. Seeing this scene, General Jason cried out, “Ice Dragon Breath! Heavens...your dragon really has evolved into the adolescent form's final state!”

Following Jason's exclamation, all the enemy men surrounding the little Frost Wurm were quickly covered with hoar frost. Suo Jia couldn't help but shake his head and sigh in praise at this sight. He knew that those guys had been completely frozen into ice cubes. They couldn't even die if they wanted to.

The Ice Dragon Breath could be blocked. Experts could use their battle qi to repel the cold air outside their bodies. However...if it wasn't blocked, they'd die for sure. The Ice Dragon Breath would freeze people from inside out. Once the hoar frost appeared outside the body, it indicated that the body had been completely frozen. Otherwise, this frost wouldn't appear!

Looking at the crowd of humans that now looked like wax underneath it in satisfaction, the little Frost Wurm slowly flapped

its wings and flew deeper into the enemy ranks. Before it had gotten very far, it opened its great mouth once more, and sprayed out another Ice Dragon Breath. In an instant, hundreds of enemies below it had become wax figures.

Seeing this scene, the roar of cheers rang out from Dawn's side. However, the Alliance's side had all turned pale with fright. If this creature kept killing its way through, the entire Alliance army would soon be wiped out.

After thinking over it carefully, the Alliance leader abruptly turned around and transmitted an order, "Immediately pass on my command: the experts of the 180 thief groups are to go obstruct that ice dragon. They must not let it continue killing."

The officials quickly ran out to transmit the message. At the same time, the Alliance leader couldn't hold back his sigh. Originally... these 180 experts had been prepared to work together with the army from the opposite direction and attack at the same time to seize Dawn in one go. But he hadn't imagined that such a domineering creature would suddenly appear on Dawn's side. This had forced him to dispatch his strongest troops earlier.

Although they only had 180 experts, these experts weren't soldiers. They were the strongest people among the 180 thief groups aside from the heads of command. Any one of them could face an expert by themselves, and they couldn't be compared to soldiers.

The Alliance leader had a helpless expression in his eyes as he bitterly looked at the little Frost Wurm flying in midair,

continuously spraying freezing air below it. Such a powerful overlord of the sky had too much destructive power; it could completely ignore long ranged attacks, yet could kill the troops on the ground in huge batches. It was really too overpowered.

Suo Jia watched in delight at the little Frost Wurm's display of might. With the protection of the .5m thick Glacial Armor, the pet was completely able to ignore any flying projectiles, as well as the long distance archers, and any other attacks that came flying through the air. All of them were deflected from the firm Glacial Armor, and the little Frost Wurm's body didn't even shake.

Chapter 240: Awesome Might Of The Ice Dragon (Part 2)

But soon, Suo Jia felt that something was off. An overflowing murderous aura suddenly came from the direction of the enemy camp. When Suo Jia turned to look around, he saw nearly 200 figures jumping up like pellets over the soldiers' heads, and practically flying towards the little Frost Wyrms to surround it.

Suo Jia's heart skipped a beat. Using telepathy, he hurriedly ordered the little Frost Wyrms that the enemy experts had arrived, and that it needed to be on guard. If the situation seemed disadvantageous, it was to immediately retreat. It could not take any risks!

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, a few dozen figures suddenly jumped up from the enemy ranks below, brandishing the weapons in their hands. They surrounded the dragon in midair, their weapons radiating a magnificent light. The little Frost Wyrms could tell that these were the experts its master had mentioned.

Faced against the enemy that was jumping up like cockroaches, the little Frost Wyrms opened its mouth fearlessly and raised its head to spray another Ice Dragon Breath downwards. Seeing this scene, Suo Jia couldn't help but hold his breath anxiously, waiting for the outcome.

The results were quickly revealed. Waving the weapons in their hands, the figures deflected the thick, chilly air, and frenzily charged towards the little dragon, still as imposing as before.

Even though he was far away, Suo Jia still paid close attention; those guys hadn't been completely unaffected. Their movements had become much slower, and it was clear to see that they had been affected by the freezing effects. Their strength had greatly weakened. But...despite this, they were still able to successfully approach the little Frost Wurm.

The little Diamond Dragon flapped its wings in midair, and... Diamond Charge was instantly activated. Spirals and lines of diamond-shaped icicles wildly shot out in all directions from the dragon.

Faced with the incoming attack from the Diamond Charge, the experts that were powerless in midair struggled to block, and could only helplessly fall to the ground. Although they hadn't been harmed in any way, they had been forced to descend by the attack.

Despite this, they hadn't lost hope. Their mission had been completed. Just as they landed, another dozen figures jumped up into the air and charged straight at the dragon, giving it absolutely no chance to use its breath.

The little Frost Wurm was helpless against the second wave of enemies. It had just activated Diamond Charge, and couldn't immediately activate any other magics. But did that mean it had absolutely no means of retaliating?

No! If the Great Frost Wurm was that easy to defeat, then it wouldn't be called the world's strongest creature. Magic attacks

weren't the Great Frost Wyrms strength; in reality, its defense was the most powerful! The reason it could live for over a thousand years was mainly because of its defense!

“Qiang! Qiang! Qiang...” A series of resonant sounds rang out as dozens of blades accurately landed on the little Frost Wyrms body. Chunks of ice flew outwards, and the little dragon retreated further and further. However, it hadn't lost control of its body as the enemy had hoped. It could be said that each one of the enemys attacks were successfully blocked. From beginning to end, the little Frost Wyrms maintained its body's equilibrium.

With its powerful defense, the experts could only leave deep lines or gouges in the Glacial Armor. None of them were able to harm the little Frost Wyrms underneath it at all. This was the Great Frost Wyrms greatest characteristic!

However, although it was said to be the greatest, it didn't eliminate other circumstances. In reality, while the Great Frost Wyrms had the most powerful defense, it also had another trait: extremely formidable physical attacks!

If one just compared defense, it could be said for certain that the Great Frost Wyrms couldn't possibly defeat the Black Dragon King. However, a mature Great Frost Wyrms could easily defeat a dozen Black Dragons by itself. Why was that?

Thats right. When comparing defense, the Great Frost Wyrms physical attacks were definitely the worlds #1. Although the Mengma also had powerful physical attack, it was only the ruler of the earth. However, the Great Frost Wyrms was an absolute power

monarch!

After being hit by this chain of attacks, the little Frost Wyrmling felt as if its pride had been damaged, and was even about to fly into a rage out of humiliation. The dragon watched as each enemy landed back on the ground after finishing their attacks, and was tempted to just chase after them and bite them to death. Unfortunately... just as they landed, a third wave of enemies jumped into the air to meet the little Frost Wyrmling.

“Roar!” The little Frost Wyrmling angrily roared at the sky. The next moment...its body turned around in midair, and its long, thick and solid tail whipped outwards like a large whip. With a sweep through the air, all the enemies’ bodies it touched were violently sent flying back hundreds of meters, like baseballs. Then they crashed into the ground with a fierce bang. Although they didn’t die, they were in a very miserable state.

A single whip of its tail sent 17/30 enemies flying outwards. But the remaining enemies quickly charged at the little Frost Wyrmling. Once they initiated their attack, they refused to accept the situation if they hadn’t achieved their objective.

Facing the enemy quickly flying towards it, the dragon remained fearless. Its magic power fluctuated, and the outer layers of the Glacial Armor quickly restored themselves. At the same time, the little Frost Wyrmling wildly slashed out its sharp front claws. As if it was batting at flies, the enemies were smacked down one after another.

Although the enemies weren’t completely smashed into the

ground, the little dragon's Glacial Armor took the brunt of the remaining attacks. Shards of ice flew around without harming anything, and instantly restored the broken parts of the Glacial Armor.

But although the enemy couldn't do anything about the little Frost Wyrms, the Frost Wyrms couldn't really do anything major to the opposite party either (although their situation was slightly worse). For a moment, the battle was deadlocked.

Watching the lively battle, Suo Jia could tell that with these experts present, the little Frost Wyrms wouldn't have the chance to act. In addition...the dragon consumed massive amounts of energy. If this deadlock continued, the little Frost Wyrms would definitely run out of energy first. At that point, even flying back to the city would prove to be an issue.

Suo Jia hurriedly ordered for the dragon to think of some way to leave the battle and return to the city. After all...it had only been sent out today for Suo Jia to get a taste of its strength. The objective wasn't to decimate many enemies. Now that this goal had already been reached, there was absolutely no need for the dragon to continue fighting.

Receiving the command, the little Frost Wyrms unwillingly spat out a few more Ice Dragon Breaths and some Diamond Charges before flying back to the city walls with its head hung down in reluctance.

The Alliance army couldn't help but bitterly smile at the sight of the little Frost Wyrms quickly retreating into the distance. The

current situation was that the dragon couldn't defeat them, but it could come and go however it pleased. If it wanted to leave, nobody could possibly block it. Although they could chase after it... the result would be the same if they reached the area of the arrow showers again. They couldn't possibly contend against a sky full of arrows.

After withdrawing the little Frost Wyrms, Suo Jia excitedly summoned the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes back as well. He commanded that from then on, the Frost Wyrms would act together with them. In the mornings, they'd all fight outside the city, and in the nights, they'd free fight amongst each other in the training area, the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes vs the little Frost Wyrms! This would increase their strength while also deepening their understanding of the dragon, and improve their mutual connections with each other.

Suo Jia knew that by the time the little Frost Wyrms evolved once more and entered the long term period, it could become a mount. By then, he could use the mutual relationship between the dragon and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes to harmonize them all together.

When some people are happy, others are worried. While Suo Jia was beyond delighted, the Alliance leader outside the city, as well as Marquis Karuda, had worried frowns on their faces. Originally... the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had already given them quite a headache. Now, a Great Frost Wyrms had joined the mix. The unfavorable situation was getting more difficult to deal with.

After pondering over it for a long time, the Alliance leader said in

a heavy voice, “City Lord Karuda, it looks like...we’ll have to execute our pincer attack plans sooner. Although the preparations aren’t yet sufficient, we’ll end up being destroyed if we delay any longer!”

City Lord Karuda considered the Alliance leader’s words for a while, then resolutely stood up and said, “Alright, tomorrow night then. Tomorrow evening at 12am, the troops on either side of the city will attack Dawn simultaneously. I refuse to believe the 400,000 soldiers can’t do anything to that puny Dawn!”

Chapter 241: Major Victory (Part 1)

“Kill, kill, kill...” Earth-shaking shouts cried out, splitting through the midnight sky. Although everyone knew that the enemy would attack simultaneously from both sides sooner or later, nobody knew that the enemy would choose this day.

Hearing the shouts, Suo Jia abruptly awoke from his meditation, and he began to listen more closely. The yells seemed to be coming from all directions, and he couldn't tell exactly where they originated. It seemed as if they were completely surrounded by the enemy.

“Not good!” Suo Jia suddenly jumped up from his daze, and quickly walked out of the city lord's mansion. He knew that it was time for the enemy's attack. This was the most critical battle!

Suo Jia rushed to the city walls and looked out. However, it was just darkness; with the cover of the night, there was no way of discerning where the enemy was. It wasn't even possible to tell whether the enemy was present, or their numbers if they were.

General Jason saw Suo Jia rushing over, and greeted him with a grave expression. He quickly said, “Not good, Young Master. The enemy has attacked from both sides of the walls at the same time. What do we do? Do we let the 5000 regular pike users defend the other side?”

“No!” Suo Jia firmly said, “Don't worry about the back walls; there are 10,000 slave pike users and 10,000 swordsmen there.

That place won't have a problem. As long as the Angelic Phoenixes and the Frost Wyrms rush over there to defeat the experts, that side won't be a problem."

General Jason quickly pondered over this. Soon after, he firmly said, "That's right. Young Master's words are correct. The 20,000 men with the addition of the 10,000 crossbows the swordsmen have will indeed be well fortified. Moreover, the Angelic Phoenixes and the dragon can work together to defeat the enemy experts."

"Mhm..." Suo Jia nodded and chuckled darkly, "The other walls are only 100 meters long. Each Angelic Phoenix only needs to defend 3 meters. With the support of the swordsmen's 10,000 crossbows, it definitely won't be a problem." Suo Jia then looked out into the nothingness of the night in concern.

"I understand..." General Jason nodded, and didn't inquire any further. He commanded for the 5000 regular pike users to all gather outside the gates; tonight's battle was too important. Regardless of whether it was the enemy or Dawn, neither of them could afford to lose!

Although the night was very dark, the wind wasn't large. If it weren't for the surrounding shouts of 'kill', it would've definitely been a very comfortable night. The evening breeze was comforting, giving any person on the walls a feeling of relaxation. However, Suo Jia knew that this gentle breeze would soon reek of blood.

"Hm?" Just as Suo Jia was thinking this, the top part of the city walls suddenly began to blaze brightly. The next moment...

countless large, flaming objects tumbled down from the city walls. Starting from a height of 10 meters, they quickly tumbled down the slope of 75 degrees and 50 meters outwards before ceasing movement.

Suo Jia stared at the large, burning objects 50 meters away in shock, and frowned in confusion. What was going on? The enemy hadn't arrived yet, and these were being released already?

A guard by Suo Jia's side explained, "City Lord, this is the new thing the slave soldiers are testing. It is a flammable object that uses animal oil mixed with tree oil and some plants' flowers. Even if they're tossed into the water, they will continue burning. It's normally used as illumination!"

"Illumination!" Suo Jia couldn't help but sigh in praise at the objects that now lit up the 100 meter perimeter around the city walls. These were really original. With them, they wouldn't have to worry about not being able to see the enemy. With the objects' illumination, nobody within the 100 meter perimeter would go undetected.

"Kill..." Suddenly, world-shaking shouts came from the city walls behind Suo Jia. At the same time, a violent boom rang out, and a blazing fire lit up half the horizon!

Suo Jia turned around anxiously to look behind him. He wasn't sure why, but his heart was now furiously racing. Although theoretically, those walls were supposed to be impenetrable by attack, the enemy's power in such a dark night was extremely vast. Nobody could dare say anything with 100% confidence!

Suo Jia suddenly sensed something, and he quickly turned around to look back at the illuminated area in front of the city walls. The next instant...thousands of figures jumped up and charged outwards towards the city walls at insane speeds.

The slave soldiers' reaction speeds were definitely fast. At pretty much the same time the figures appeared, showers of rain stormed outwards. But what shocked everyone was that these arrows didn't induce any casualties; as the storm passed over, majority of the figures just waved their weapons and swept the arrows away as they continued to race forwards. Only a small minority of the enemy were struck by the attack and fell to the ground.

As Suo Jia watched the approaching enemy, he realized that these had to be a portion of the 2000 experts. It was clear to see that they had prepared to utilize the cover of the night to attack Dawn City in one breath. It looked like...the enemy had gotten anxious.

Suo Jia issued a series of commands. 5000 slave pike users quickly moved to block the experts outside the city as the 5000 regular pike users had already reached the opposite walls.

“Kill!” With wild shouts, the thousand enemy experts quickly jumped up the precipitous city walls. After just a few steps, they all managed to reach the top of the walls!

Suo Jia sighed in praise at this scene. If it were daytime, they definitely wouldn't have gotten the chance to even walk half a step

up the walls. The archers' range was 300 meters, so long before they reached the area, the enemy would've been shot dead.

But now, they couldn't discover the enemy's presence until they had entered the 100 meter range. This distance was something that could be covered in mere seconds; as long as they could resist the first wave of arrows, it would be enough. In addition...at such close range, the archers' destructive force had decreased by a lot. This wasn't their best range.

The enemy on the city walls seemed somewhat at loss. After reaching the top, they had suddenly discovered that it was actually extremely empty and flat. There were no adversaries there, while the archers continued to shoot at them from the bunkers underneath.

After sweeping the area, the thousand experts soon discovered the profound secret of the city walls. It turned out...that Dawn's soldiers had all hidden themselves within the bunkers within the walls. Unless they found the entrances, there was no way they could injure the other party.

The thousand experts roared as they all jumped off from the 10 meter tall city walls, prepared to enter the city through the rock corridors so that they could slaughter Dawn Army.

“Hu...hu...hu...” Just when the enemy experts had all landed on the ground, a fierce whizzing sound came out from within the city walls. The area in front of the experts suddenly lit up with thousands of little fires.

“Gasp!” The thousand experts couldn’t help but sharply inhale at the sight of the 5000 steel-covered soldiers in neat formation. They all knew who these 5000 men were....Dawn City’s unyielding defense force: the regular pike users! It was because of this army that Dawn had successfully defended itself for over 20 years!

Originally, according to Karuda’s and the Alliance leader’s judgment, the Mengma Knights and the pike users were supposed to have been returned to the Empire. Otherwise, why hadn’t they showed up during the previous battles? But now they knew that at the very least, the Empire’s pike users hadn’t been taken away; they were standing right in front of them.

“Attack!” A resonant cry rang out, and the 5000 pike users began to move uniformly. With a shout, they suddenly stood straight in a horizontal line. Their 4 meter long pikes were instantly arranged in a formation, the tips pointed towards the thief experts.

From above, one could see the thousand enemy experts trapped below the city walls by the pike users, like ravenous predators. Countless chilling pikes came together to form a formation similar to a metal bucket; nobody could break through or run away!

Although on the surface, there were only 5 times more pike users than thief experts, the pike users combined formation wasn’t actually like that. Each thief had to face hundreds of pikes simultaneously, not just five. In addition...the city walls were behind them, so they didn’t even have anywhere to hide.

Of course, they could jump upwards and return to the top of the city walls. But in such a crowded area, there was a possibility that they couldn't jump up if they wanted to. Even if they did, the battle on the city walls would definitely end in their defeat.

A powerful voice suddenly called out, "Immediately put down your weapons and obediently surrender. Otherwise, you will all be killed!"

Chapter 242: Major Victory (Part 2)

Hearing this imposing voice, the thieves could only grit their teeth. What kind of joke was that? They definitely wouldn't surrender. Even if they couldn't defeat the enemy, there was no way the enemy could possibly prevent them from running away with the cover of darkness on their side!

“Hmph!” Seeing the thief experts' expressions, that imposing voice snorted and said in a low voice, “In that case, don't blame me for being merciless. Crossbows!”

With one hand, the pike users controlled their pikes, and with the other hand, they reached to pull out small and exquisite crossbows. The arrows were all aimed at the thousand thief experts within the encirclement.

Seeing the familiar crossbows, the thieves' eyes couldn't help but flash darkly, and they internally lamented. With the 5000 crossbows aimed at them, they didn't even have the privilege of running away. As soon as they started to flee, they'd be instantly pierced into sieves. These things only had an effective range of 50 meters, but under the current circumstances, they could display their full might.

“Surrender! Surrender! Surrender!” The piker users coldly shouted in anger at the fearful thieves. These furious shouts gradually came together, the world-shaking sound lingering in the air above Dawn.

Faced against the 5000 gleaming, crossbows, the thief experts began to hesitate. Finally...a hundred figures almost simultaneously jumped up into the air, attempting to return to the top of the walls and flee back into the thief army. However, before they had gotten very high up, a tough and durable net obstructed them from above, and they were desolately forced back to the ground.

The thieves raised their heads in shock at the large, sturdy net weaved from vines. It had already tightly closed off the airspace, so their final escape route had been completely sealed.

With gritted teeth, the thieves still firmly refused to surrender, and they brandished the weapons in their hands as they densely charged at the pike users. No matter what, they wouldn't surrender, even if they died.

“Hah...” Seeing that the thief army was unafraid of death, the imposing voice sighed and said gloomily, “Those who surrender, put down your weapons! If you dare to assault, you will be killed...”

The tips of the 5000 pike users all suddenly lit up with a bright glow. Just as the thief soldiers attempted to slash at some pike users, countless glittering, brightly glowing pike tips instantly pierced through their bodies.

As pike users, they were all trained in piercing. They gathered all their battle qi at the tip of the pike, and thrust it outwards with all their force. This could break through even steel plates, as it had an extremely large destructive force that pretty much couldn't be

blocked by anything. These pike users were guys that had trained in battle qi for over 30 years, so none of them were inferior to the enemy's experts.

After a moment, the hundred thief experts that had attempted to sneak attack all hung from pikes. Under the glow of the fire, scarlet blood sprayed out spectacularly. Each thief had at least a dozen pikes sticking out from them.

“Zizi...” The next instant...the surrounding thief experts all watched as those terrifyingly sharp pikes were slowly retracted. The friction had caused that horrifying, buzzing sound.

“Putong...putong...” After losing the pikes' support, the hundred thief experts' unconscious bodies fell to the ground. As the remaining thieves watched their companions die horribly in front of them, they suddenly realized that they had absolutely no chance of pulling surprise attacks in front of the Empire's elite pike users. Their only choices were surrender or death.

The Empire's pike users had gone through special training that focused on defense specifically. These people had 30 or more years of battle experience. One couldn't possibly find any chances against them. No matter how powerful the enemy was, they would be destroyed once they fell into this formation.

The thieves all slowly dropped their weapons, their hands around their heads as they crouched on the ground. If they wanted to suddenly attack, they would've charged together with their companions just now. Since they hadn't acted earlier, the threat of death had made them scared to move. Aside from surrendering,

they didn't have any other paths to choose from.

Seeing the thief experts surrender after one another, the pike users split up, and the hundred slave soldiers walked over to cuff each thief's wrist with a steel bracelet. With these bracelets on, their internal magic power and battle qi would be completely sealed. In addition...these bracelets could only be opened with a specific key. If they were broken, they'd instantly shoot out a poisonous needle through the skin of the wearer's wrist, causing the enemy to instantly die.

After cuffing the enemy, the hundred slave soldiers sent the thousand thief experts away into the city's prisons. The reason they didn't kill the enemy was because they were all capable individuals. Once the thief army was annihilated, these people could be forced into submission.

Putting aside what was happening within the city, the thief army was still gushing forwards like a tide outside the city. Only victory was allowed in tonight's battle, so the Thief Alliance and Oz City had dispatched all of their forces to attempt to burst through Dawn's defensive line by following the thousand experts after breaking the formation.

Unfortunately, after watching the thousand experts jump down from the city walls, there hadn't been any more movements. There were no shouts, no resounding echoes of battle. It was like they had jumped into Hell; there were no longer any sounds of activity.

Although breaking the formation had failed, tonight's battle was already irreversible. This was the determining battle, one that

nobody could afford to lose. That's why, the Alliance and Oz City's armies unyieldingly charged in attack at the city walls, secretly praying that those thousand experts had effectively destroyed Dawn's archers.

Unfortunately for them, as soon as they rushed into the illuminated area, they were welcomed with a sky filled with arrows despite their prayers. It was not any different from before. Seeing this scene, everyone realized that those thousand experts were done for.

However, the enemy didn't fall straight into despair. The army split up on the ground, and a strange, large machine was slowly pushed over. Seeing the peculiar machine, the slave soldiers couldn't help but feel bewilderment. What exactly was that?

Everyone watched as the machine was pushed in front of the city gates. Then...a fierce ramming sound floated in the night air. Although nothing could be seen, the slave soldiers all knew that the enemy was ramming the city gates.

“Hahahaha...” Although they were in battle, seeing the enemy make such hilarious actions made the slave soldiers unable to hold back their laughter. In reality, those gates were just decoration; behind the wooden door was actually the city wall. At the moment, Dawn didn't have any city gates.

In the beginning, the enemy didn't know what Dawn Army was laughing at. But...after they had finally smashed Dawn's city gates into smithereens, they were depressed to discover that these so-called city gates were pretty much the same as the city walls. It was

clearly a fake door, as the only thing behind it was a wall. What kind of passageway was that?

At this discovery, the enemy's morale was greatly destroyed. With such high city walls and such concentrated firepower, attacking was clearly just seeking death. Even if one was tired of living, they wouldn't go die in such a way.

Finally, at daybreak, after attacking for an entire night, the Alliance was forced to retreat. If they didn't leave now, Dawn Army's archers would regain their vision, and then he wouldn't be able to leave even if he wanted to. Dawn Army's arrow shower had caused so many losses here.

"Oh!" Seeing the enemy miserable retreating, loud, shaking cheers arose from the top of the city walls. The battle that they had thought would be the hardest one yet ended just like that. Dawn Army had successfully defended the city walls, without letting the enemy gain any benefits.

Chapter 243: Powerful Magic Machine (Part 1)

The victor of the third Dawn battle was once again Dawn. But this time, they finally suffered casualties. In addition, the casualties hadn't come from the direction of the back walls, but the front ones.

From the beginning of the battle, the people at the front gates had suffered from powerful attacks. The 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes alone couldn't block all of the enemy's main force. Thus, the swordsmen and the slave pike users could only try to hold them back and completely seal the city walls.

Originally, Suo Jia and the others had thought that the 10,000 crossbow holders with the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would definitely be able to protect the city walls to the point where it was invulnerable to attack. However, they had all overlooked the fact that Dawn wasn't the only one that had a mid-ranged attack force.

Although the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and the others had already fought very hard, especially the Frost Wurm, which hadn't rested for an entire night, the enemy had been too strong. Those 2000 experts from the opposite direction was equivalent to the frontal assault's normal soldiers. Even though Dawn's forces had tried their hardest to resist, they were unable to block the enemy's powerful attack.

Fortunately, the swordsmen had been able to go against them with their crossbows to support the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. However...when the enemy all pulled out daggers, the Angelic Six-

Winged Phoenixes suddenly realized that these while these guys didn't have crossbows, they had knife-throwing skills. Each one of the enemy's men had an effective shooting range of 50 meters, just like the crossbow users!

Just like that, Dawn Army began to suffer from casualties. It was pretty much one life lost for every one of the enemy's lives. Both Dawn Army's and the enemy's sides had lost a lot of people. By dawnbreak, Dawn's frontal defense force had dwindled from 20,000 men to 4,000 men, with 16,000 or more injured.

Suo Jia shook as he glared in fury at the 100 meters of completely crimson-soaked city walls in front of him. He hadn't realized, really hadn't even imagined, that the enemy would be so powerful, and would deal so much damage to Dawn. This was something that Suo Jia refused to accept.

Although the enemy gotten that much either, and left 30,000 or more corpses behind, Suo Jia still refused to accept this outcome. He stared at into the unclear, hazy skies outside the gates, and tightly clenched his fists; there would eventually be a day where he'd demand for repayment!

The battle's statistics were quickly totaled. 16,000 soldiers had been sacrificed outside the front gates, while 33,000 enemies had died. It was pretty much a 1:2 ratio. On the opposite side however, they hadn't lost a single person. 100,000 enemies had been killed that night, basically completely eliminating the enemy force's presence.

However, Suo Jia knew that the war hadn't ended yet. Based on

the information from mounted scouts, Oz City's area still had 400,000 men currently gathering in Dawn's direction. It was clear to see that Karuda wouldn't admit defeat. Once he did, the border area's reputation would be completely lost. No matter what, he had to obtain victory in this war.

Suo Jia turned around and rushed towards the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' training area. Last night's battle had been too bitter; all the enemies they had faced were much stronger than them. Suo Jia didn't even understand how they had lasted.

When Suo Jia entered the training area and glanced around, he saw that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were all sitting on the ground in exhaustion, with haggard faces. Although their spirit power, physical power, and battle qi had all been restored by the potions, their mental exhaustion was incurable.

Suo Jia walked up to Duo Mei and asked in concern, "How are you, Duo Mei? You must be really tired from last night's battle, right?"

"Yea..." Duo Mei nodded weakly and said with a fearful expression, "The enemy was really too powerful, to a point where it was impossible to believe. Even the normal enemy soldiers were more powerful than the 2,000 experts on the opposite side. As for the slightly more formidable elite soldiers, they were so mighty that it only induced fear. In reality, if we hadn't activated the Fire Phoenix equipment set's effects, we wouldn't have been able to endure a single hit."

"That..." Suo Jia stared in astonishment. If the enemy was really

that powerful, then Dawn was in danger. Just the people left were enough to completely eliminate Dawn Army.

Of course, Suo Jia could also transfer the 5,000 pike users outside the city gates. But if he did that, Dawn would most likely collapse right then. Once the enemy experts passed over the wall, they would be able to threaten Dawn's archery formations. If the city walls were lost, Dawn was doomed. Just defending the gates was meaningless.

Suo Jia's frown grew deeper and deeper as he pondered the issue for a long time. With their current strength, Suo Jia knew that there was no way they could defend the city. It looked like they could only put their hopes on those 1000 Magic Automatons now!

Suo Jia didn't waste any time, and quickly stood up to leave the training area. He rushed over to the alchemy lab within the city lord's mansion. At this point, he could only rely on the Magic Automatons!

By reading the recorded notes, Suo Jia understood these Magic Automatons' abilities. In reality, they weren't really automatons, but more like machine-operated type objects.

Actually, these so-called Magic Automatons used a fixed array to activate their machine's systems. By responding to energy, temperature, and life signs, they probed their surroundings to find the enemy. After searching through all the energy, temperature, and life sign readings within a certain perimeter, these Magic Automatons would automatically begin to move. By extracting energy from the magic cores within them, they would initiate

attacks on the enemy! Even if it was their owner that entered the attack range, they would still become a target. They didn't actually have a consciousness, or any intelligence.

Of course, that didn't mean real Magic Automatons didn't exist. They really did exist, but...the ones that Suo Jia had obtained were definitely not them, they were just mechanical bodies.

As the great battle had just passed, Suo Jia knew that there would definitely be a few days of intermittence. If he wasn't able to release the Magic Automatons appropriately within these few days, Dawn would be forced to lose a large number of soldiers again in the next battle.

Suo Jia immediately called upon the whole city's forces to begin changing the outside walls. A large amount of rocks were extracted and shipped to the opposite walls. The construction followed the records to establish an area for the automatons to be able to respond in. At the same time, Suo Jia chose 1,000 smarter and intelligent slave soldiers to specially defend these Magic Automatons. There was a three-shift system every day so that every person only had to guard them for 1 hour before going off to rest.

Although the project was extremely large, Dawn had tons of people. After working day and night for an entire week, the hundred meter long city walls were finally finished being fixed up. As Suo Jia looked at the imposing walls, he nodded in satisfaction; this time, he wasn't afraid of anyone attacking them.

After the modifications, the city walls were 20 meters in height,

and as wide as a small mountain. Starting from 2 meters, each level had a Magic Automaton that could release blazing fireballs. There were a total of 9 levels, and each level shot 100 fireballs. The firepower was so concentrated that even if Suo Jia went, he'd be instantly turned into slag.

However, the arrangements didn't end there. On the top of the city walls were 100 speed-type harvesters. These guys were extremely fast, and held two blades in their hands. Their whole bodies were invulnerable, and even if they were damaged, Suo Jia could immediately repair them. It wasn't hard because they were machines, not real automatons.

Looking out from the distance at the 20 meter tall city walls filled with rows and columns of black holes made anyone feel terrified.

The 200 meter circumference in front of the city walls were all paved with rocks as glossy as mirrors. Two mounds had been built up by piling thick slabs, forming an 100 meter wide and 200 meter long plaza! This plaza was the response area that all the Magic Automatons could sense in. Once the enemy entered this plaza, the Magic Automatons would fire 900 fireballs at them. Basically, unless the owner allowed them, even Divine Warriors couldn't possibly cover that area.

Although the city walls had already become so stable, Suo Jia still didn't dare to relax, and he re-established another 10,000 swordsmen to guard the place for a long time. Each of the swordsmen were given a crossbow. That way, even if the enemy managed to break through the Magic Automatons area, they wouldn't be able to immediately seize Dawn, which gave Dawn

Army enough time to deploy another team.

Just as Suo Jia had predicted, the third night after the Magic Automatons had been positioned, the enemy once again charged at Dawn while attacking from both sides simultaneously. But this time, Suo Jia was well prepared; he was 100% confident in Dawn City's ability to face the enemy.

First, Suo Jia dispatched the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and the Frost Wyrms to the back wallside. Just as the enemy came rushing through, they jumped down from the city walls to intercept the enemy's vanguards underneath.

Next, the 5000 pike users remained stationed at the rear city walls, waiting to be sent out at any given time. If the enemy broke through the city walls, the pike users would instantly surround them and capture the enemy alive. Perhaps attacking them wasn't possible, but in terms of making a defensive perimeter, they were able to capture any expert alive.

But this time, the enemy clearly didn't focus their attack on the opposite side. It was just an attempt to pin down Dawn's troops. The enemy's main attack point was still the front walls. The great benefits that they had gained from the last battle had given the enemy the chance to experience the sweet taste of victory, and so they prepared to advance this battle in the same way.

Although the enemy's number of casualties had been two times greater than Dawn Army's, Dawn only had a total of 100,000 men. In addition, the enemy had only lost weaker, minor soldiers last time. The real generals hadn't died, so the enemy was completely

confident that if their main forces went out to battle, evening out the casualties definitely wouldn't be a problem. That way, they'd only lose 10,000 lives at most, and they'd be able to obtain Dawn in exchange. That was more than worthwhile.

As the only exit from the Holy Light Empire to the other six countries, this place's strategic and commercial values were really immeasurable. As long as one possessed this city, the revenue from imposing a tariff on merchants alone was already an astronomical amount. In addition...Dawn City was easy to guard. Once one had this kind of foundational area, they wouldn't fear even other empires. After all...the front city walls were only 100 meters. No matter how many men one had, only a few thousand could attack at the same time.

After obtaining Dawn City, one only had to build a good relationship with Holy Light Empire, and everything else after would be like a dream. They could attack anyone they wanted. As thieves that had private permits, they would definitely be able to develop a global thief alliance with this piece of land as their foundation.

Putting aside the battle going on at the opposite side, there was a powerful 100,000 man army outside the city front in the mountain pass, currently following along the cliffs towards Dawn to attack. The people that had come today were all experts among experts. In this upcoming night battle, they'd disregard all losses and completely seize Dawn. As long as they obtained the city, any amount of sacrifices would be worth it.

Chapter 244: Powerful Magic Machine

(Part 2)

Under the cover of the night, the thief army finally reached Dawn City's walls. Seeing the imposing walls, the thieves all unconsciously stopped in their tracks and stared at them in shock.

How tall was 20 meters? Normal people probably find it difficult to imagine. If a one story building is 3 meters tall, then a height of 20 meters would be a 7 story building. That wasn't a small amount! Unless there was a ladder, it was very difficult to climb on top of it.

What made the thieves feel most at loss was the fact that the walls no longer had a slope to speak of. It was as precipitous as a cliff, completely perpendicular at a 90 degree angle. Their dreams of charging along the walls were instantly shattered.

As long as there was an incline, even 75 degrees, the thief army was confident they could climb up. But...faced with a 90 degree wall, how were they supposed to get up? If they really wanted to try climbing it, it wouldn't be a matter of getting a few steps up before falling, but more like directly crashing into the walls.

The thieves all surveyed their surroundings. The previously muddy ground before the walls were now paved neatly with level stones, forming a rectangular square that was 100 meters wide and 200 meters long. The square's two sides were near the mountains, and had tall walls erected around them. This clearly wasn't a battlefield, but a public square.

“Tch...” Cursing lowly, the Alliance leader waved his hand and shouted, “Get the grappling hooks out, and throw some ropes. Even if there isn’t any slope, we can use ropes to climb upwards!”

A few hundred soldiers quickly flew out at the Alliance leader’s command with long ropes in their hands, bounding towards the walls. As long as the hooks caught on the top of the city walls, they’d be able to climb up the ropes.

“Creak...creak...creak..” Just as the soldiers with the ropes ran onto the limestone paved square, a series of creaking sounds rang out from within the walls. The next instant...countless scarlet fireballs shot out as fast as lightning from those black holes, instantly striking the hundred rope-holding soldiers.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!” Amidst the fierce booms, not even a single cry of misery could be heard. The hundreds of soldiers had been completely blasted into dust by the fierce explosions.

The thief army was completely stunned by the sight of the blazing square. What in the world was that? That assault just now had over a hundred attacks. Could it be that...Dawn’s support troops had arrived, and they were hundreds of fire mages?

Everyone knew that if the 100 meter walls had 100 fire mages defending them, it was pretty much invulnerable to attack. That was completely impossible to break through. Nobody could possibly block over a hundred fireballs shooting at them.

However...the situation was not absolute. So what if there were

over a hundred mages? There was bound to be a point where their energy was exhausted. As long as they were willing to pay a price, the mages' magic power would soon dry up, and they wouldn't be any different from ordinary people.

The Alliance leader immediately ordered for the thief army to drive out, and push their slave soldiers towards the area of death. All the soldiers that entered the square were blasted by the violent fireballs, leaving not even a single slag behind.

Just as the Alliance leader had anticipated, after dispatching countless slave soldiers in succession...the slave soldiers that stepped past the boundary of the square were no longer attacked. Seeing this, the Alliance leader couldn't help but smile victoriously. He knew that these mages magic powers had finally been used up!

With a wave of his hand, a large number of slave soldiers quickly charged at the city walls. Not a single fireball came shooting out along their way. Seeing this, the Alliance leader was finally reassured. He led the entire army to formally advance through the square.

Standing high atop the city walls, Suo Jia coldly watched the enemy's large army gradually enter the public square. Everything that had happened just now had been planned by him. The last level of a hundred Magic Automatons had indeed been drained of energy. Currently...there were maintenance people changing their magic crystals. Soon, they'd recover their firepower.

Of course, while the first level's magic power had been

completely drained, the walls had a total of nine levels. The top level didn't count, but there were still eight other levels that could fire. The reason they hadn't activated was because Suo Jia didn't want to waste firepower. Waiting until after the enemy entered the public square to attack would provide the most profitable outcome.

Soon, the battle began. Dawn's archers all appeared on top of the city walls and rained down a sparse amount of arrows at the enemy below. Seeing this, the enemy army immediately entered their battle state. They all knew that they had to take advantage of this period of time before the mages recovered their energy to attack and occupy the top of the city walls. Otherwise, letting them blast those fierce fireballs down at them would force them into a disadvantageous position.

For a moment, the thief army were striving to rush into the public square. The thieves in the front tossed the grappling hooks in their hands. As long as the hooks securely fastened to the walls, the thief experts would be able to follow the ropes and quickly run up to the top. That way, even if they couldn't seize Dawn City, they would at least manage to even the losses to 1:1, and Dawn City would be forced to surrender.

Suo Jia watched the fierce enemies below, and smiled mercilessly. "Alright, it's about time. If we wait any longer and they manage to charge up the walls, we'll end up suffering losses."

Hearing this, General Jason nodded in praise. If they did indeed wait any longer, more of the enemy would be within the square, and Dawn's side would end up with sacrifices. Suo Jia's principle was that he'd rather kill less enemies than suffer personal losses.

General Jason felt the same.

“Attack!” Following General Jason’s imposing command...a series of creaking sounds could be heard as the 900 holes on the wall opened fire all at once. 900 blazing, scarlet fireballs whizzed out to descend towards the 100 meter wide and 200 meter long public square.

Chapter 245: Utter Destruction (Part 1)

The 900 scarlet fireballs whizzed out, and formed a crimson rain of fire. The fire elemental magic streaked down like meteors, but... incantations were normally activated by a single person. Yet the rain of fire in front was activated by 900 violent Magic Automatons all together.

The 900 Violent Fireballs were like 900 cannon balls flying through the air all at once. After drawing long arcs through the air, they crashed into the public square with a bang. The next moment...the violent, world-shaking sounds of explosion caused the ground to tremble.

The nearly 1000 shots landed on the 100 meter long and 200 meter wide public square all at once. The resulting scene was extremely tragic. The place glittered even brighter than fireworks, and in an instant, the entire square was engulfed in crimson flames.

There were no cries of misery, no struggles. After the fireballs had landed, the entire public square fell completely silent. Nobody knew how many people had been there, nor did anyone know how many casualties that wave of fireballs had brought about. The fires died out, revealing a completely empty square. All the enemy troops that had entered the square had died. There wasn't a single survivor; one couldn't even find any corpses.

Suo Jia stared at the public square in absolute shock, his jaw dropped wide open, unable to shut it. Although he had witnessed the Magic Automatons' formidability before, having all 900 of the

magic machines fire at the same time displayed a might that even Suo Jia couldn't believe.

Following the earth-shattering bang, both the inside and outside of the city fell silent. Only on the walls on the opposite side of the city were there still sounds of killing going on. However, at the front of the gates, both the enemy and Dawn Army had completely lost their ability to speak.

The Violent Fireballs were magic attacks that only Intermediate Mages and above could activate. On the other hand, activating Violent Fireballs with such a powerful destructive ability was something that even Advanced Mages couldn't do. When 900 Advanced Mages gathered together, they possessed world-shattering might that wasn't any inferior to these magic incantations.

Faced with the dead atmosphere around the limestone public square, the thief army that remained outside could only cry tears of grief. A few seconds earlier, their companions had filled the entire square, but in only a blink of an eye, their nearly 100,000 companions had completely disappeared without even leaving behind any corpses.

The violent explosion had blasted all the enemies on the limestone public square into smithereens. The floor was covered in purple-black blood, grounded bones, and mushy flesh. The mountains on both sides that were as tall as the city walls had minced flesh stuck all over them and was slowly dripping down the surface.

It was Hell. No, even Hell wasn't this horrifying. At the moment, nearly 100,000 corpses had been turned into mincemeat from the violent explosion, and it covered the square in a thick layer. The surrounding mountains and walls were all covered with the ground up meat that was gradually trickling downwards. This was a scene that had never been witnessed even in Hell.

Nobody spoke. The enemy silently retreated. Although they were very unwilling, and felt extreme grief, they all knew that such a terrifying fort wasn't something that manpower alone could seize. After seeing the tragic scene in front of them, nobody tried to charge in courageously anymore; all of them had been scared witless.

Seeing the quickly retreating enemy, Suo Jia let out a sigh. After looking around at the horrible condition outside the city, even he was momentarily at loss on how to deal with it.

Just as Suo Jia was preparing to send out the slave soldiers to go clean up the messy aftermath...the faint roar of wild beasts rang through the air. The next moment...the fierce sounds of running filled Suo Jia's ears.

Suo Jia was confused for a moment, but then saw countless magical beasts race over from the ravine's passageway. Without demur, they raced straight into the square and ravenously began to gulp down the mincemeat on the ground.

Suo Jia felt nauseous after watching this, and for a moment, almost vomited right there. In order to avoid losing face, Suo Jia hurriedly covered his mouth and raced away from the city walls,

towards the opposite side. If he watched any further, he'd definitely end up throwing up.

As Suo Jia ran towards the opposite walls, he knew that there was no longer any need for him to concern himself with the remains outside. Soon after, that disgusting mincemeat would be cleanly eaten up by those wild beasts without leaving even a single trace of bone or flesh behind. In addition, the enemy outside the front wouldn't charge over as easily after that battle. It wasn't any different from seeking death.

Suo Jia rushed to the opposite city walls. After seeing the mild attacks outside, he quickly guessed the opponent's intention. It was clear to see that the opposite party didn't plan on overtaking Dawn from this side at all. They just wanted to keep Dawn's forces here occupied, then rely on the army on the other side to destroy Dawn City's defense troops.

In terms of tactics, the enemy had definitely succeeded. If the Magic Automatons weren't there, as long as the enemy was willing to sacrifice some people, Dawn would be forced to fall. Unfortunately for them, Suo Jia's luck had led to another victory. Those thousands of Magic Automatons had combined to form an unparalleled line of defense.

This anticlimactic battle continued on until daybreak. It was evident that the army on this side hadn't yet become aware of the situation on the other side, and were dragging it on for as long as possible.

Although the battle had advanced for an entire night, the

enemy's casualties wasn't actually that large. From beginning to end, they'd used armored chariots to open up a path to charge at Dawn City's walls, but also made sure not to get too close. That's why despite fighting for so long, their injuries were limited.

Seeing the armored chariots going back and forth to provoke Dawn Army, Suo Jia felt slightly disgruntled, but he couldn't do anything. Even if he wanted the army to go out of the city to attack, how could they do it? Dawn City didn't even have city gates, there was no way to leave the city. Moreover...if they really left, the defensive powers would be lost, and victory would be hard to grasp.

It was precisely due to this reason that the enemy troops outside the city were recklessly provoking Dawn Army. Although they didn't have the strength to harm Dawn's troops, Suo Jia knew that his army's hearts had already begun to grow agitated. This wasn't a good thing.

“Rumble...rumble...rumble...” Just as Suo Jia was contemplating this, a fierce booming sound similar to rumbling thunder came from the sky. He raised his head towards the sky in bewilderment, but he found that there were no traces of clouds present. In that case, where did the thundering come from?

Chapter 246: Utter Destruction (Part 2)

Suo Jia wasn't the only one confused. The thief army and Oz City's soldiers had also raised their heads towards the sky, wondering what was going on with that thundering sound.

Everyone watched as the thundering sounds go closer and closer. In the end, it was so loud that the entire ground trembled. After a moment, everyone's expressions changed. This...this was perhaps not the sound of thunder, but the group of newly evolved cavalry racing towards them.

The expressions of the Alliance leader and Karuda couldn't help but change. They knew that they hadn't set up any cavalry here. In that case, the ones that had just appeared had to be Dawn's cavalry unit, and from the beginning to the end, Dawn only ever had one cavalry branch.

The two hurriedly commanded for the entire army to gather and prepare to retreat. As matters stood, they only wanted to safely flee. In front of the Mengmas, they'd be completely blown away. Those were definitely not something that the footsoldiers could go up against.

At the same time on the city walls, Suo Jia's eyes lit up. He had also guessed that the thundering sound was from the 5000 Mengmas, which were actually now Velociraptors. After over half a year, they had finally returned.

It wasn't just the two commanders that had realized this fact.

Even the ordinary soldiers realized something so obvious, especially Dawn Army's slave soldiers. They roared in cheers. After being held in the city for so long, finally...Dawn's iron fists had returned. Nobody could resist trying to sneak a peek at how the unbridled enemy troops would try to resist the Velociraptors.

The enemy troops on the battlefield frantically gathered. Although it wasn't to the point where their formation had broken, they were definitely stuck in a dilemma. At the same time, the silver, glittering cavalry group finally appeared in the distant horizon.

Amidst the fierce booms like rolling thunder, the Velociraptors came charging over from the horizon as fast as lightning. Even after reaching the battlefield, they did not slow down, and instead rushed straight into the enemy ranks.

Against the sudden change in situation, the Alliance leader was completely thrown into disarray. Too fast, way too fast. Only 5 minutes had elapsed between when they had first heard the thundering and when the Velociraptors had arrived. The troops hadn't even finished gathering together, yet they had been forced to meet the Velociraptors' charge.

The Alliance leader hurriedly ordered for the armored chariots to defend the front while the archers prepared to shoot. At the same time....the pike users were to immediately get into formation in preparation to intercept the enemy knights.

Following the Alliance leader's commands, the soldiers quickly spurred into action. The armored chariots rapidly formed an

interception line while the archers mixed together behind the armored chariots and drew their bows, aiming at the distantly approaching Velociraptors.

The were as fast as a storm, as quick as lightning. That was the closest possible description for the Velociraptors. Right when the enemy had pretty much gotten into formation, the Velociraptors had already entered the 200 meter radius from them.

Facing the enemy troops standing in strict formation, the 5000 Velociraptors opened their large mouths. Green lights flashed, and the armored chariots, as well as the archers behind them, suddenly felt the ground underneath them undulate. The next instant...5000 sharp, two meter long thorns suddenly leapt out from the ground. The defense had reacted too late, and the chariots flipped over, as people died. The armored chariots' defense line had been instantly overthrown by the thorns.

It wasn't over yet. The 5000 Velociraptors opened their giant mouths again, and with more flashes of green light, moldy, piercing Rock Thorns quickly amassed together, covering the 200 meter distance in a flash to lunge at the enemy's archer ranks.

The archers had only managed to shoot out a single wave of arrows before they were hit by the destructive attack. The sharp Rock Thorns sliced through the archers like vegetables. The enemy was sliced into pieces, and then uniformly fell to the ground. Those penetrative Rock Thorns weren't something they could defend against.

Without waiting for the enemy to react, the Velociraptors swept

through and killed the enemy troops like the wind. The 5000 Velociraptor Knights didn't bother attacking at all, and simply leaned closely against the Velociraptors' backs. The Velociraptors' powerful momentum plowed through the enemy troops like a tank, paving open a road of flesh.

The Velociraptors easily ripped apart the enemy like a sharp blade slashing at a piece of battered cloth. After just a moment's effort, the Velociraptors had opened a wide path through the group of enemies. They then wildly bounded forward another thousand meters before suddenly turning around and racing towards the enemy troops once more.

The enemy could only stand there stunned as they watched the Velociraptor Knights charge at them again. What kind of things were those. What kind of Knights were they. The enemy hadn't ever seen, or even heard of such Knights before.

From the outside, it was only a Velociraptor. However, these Velociraptors weren't just flesh, but metal, or they could also be said to be machines. As they watched the approaching opponents, the enemy soldiers instantly felt defeated. That wasn't something humans could possibly resist.

At the same time, on top of the walls, Suo Jia's eyes had widened in excitement as he watched the new Velociraptor Knights. Just as he had anticipated, they had become genuine masters among the mighty warriors, masters full of power and grandeur.

Currently, the Velociraptors were equipped with the newest generation of the dwarf blacksmiths' armors. Their bodies were

completely covered with steel. In order to prevent disrupting their movements, these Velociraptor armors had been created with a single metal sheet. There were absolutely no holes anywhere from their heads to their feet. Even their eyes were covered with scarlet crystal sheets.

Saying that they were armed to their teeth, was definitely not an exaggeration. At the moment, the Velociraptors were not only completely covered in armor, but their large and powerful feet had been fitted with sharp and penetrating blades. Their front talons were just as eye-catching. Nobody would be stupid enough to doubt these Velociraptors' attack power. With their brute force, they could easily destroy any enemy.

Following the Velociraptors' charge, the enemy finally fell apart completely, losing all structure and command. Everyone frantically ran away. However, they had forgotten that they couldn't possibly outrun the speed kings on their own two feet.

The Velociraptors first increased their speed, then suddenly spread apart to form a vector-like formation, similar to that of an arrow, and rushed at the enemy. At the same time, all the Velociraptor Knights straightened their backs atop their mounts, revealing the cold war blades in their hands to the world.

The Velociraptor Knights had spent their entire lives on the battlefield, and experienced thousands of fights. They were extremely proficient in battle qi. It could be said that they were battle experts, the artists of the battlefield. They didn't think going against this routed enemy was a battle, but simply harvesting ripe crops.

The Velociraptor Knights pierced and slashed their way through with their war blades.

Chapter 247: Shocking Change (Part 1)

For the following period of time, the enemy didn't dare to attack, nor did they dare to approach. However....the Dawn Army wasn't just resting. After the battle...only 80,000 out of the 100,000 slave soldiers remained. It had been a cruel battle that had forced everyone to work hard. The slave soldiers had all realized that if they wanted to keep their lives, they'd have to make their defense installations sturdier. A single slip-up would lead to a vain death.

Everyone had strived to make Dawn City's walls as Suo Jia had designed them to be, building them every day. The efforts of 80,000 men could complete any project, no matter how vast. However...in order to make sure the city walls would become a defense line that would never fall, the slave soldiers were never satisfied. Using Suo Jia's requests as the foundation, they utilized their intelligence to make the city walls even more solid and sturdy.

At the same time, over countless of battles, Suo Jia had realized that the putting 1000 magic machines outside the front wasn't just 'extravagant', it was a complete waste. In reality, 100 magic machines were enough to defend that 100 meter stretch of walls. 900 was way too much.

However, to secure their motive, Suo Jia had left 300 magic machines in the front walls, with 200 of them being Violent Fireballs type magic machines, while the other 100 were those speed-type magic machines.

Among the remaining 700, 100 of them were arranged on both

sides of the city gates. Once the doors closed, an opening mechanism would cause the 100 magic machines to instantly turn the area in front of the gates into Hell. Any life forms that entered would be ruthlessly killed.

The other 600 had been evenly split spread out along the top of the city walls 20 meters away from each other. They were used as sentinels. Nobody could even think of trying to climb over the walls at night. As soon as anyone approached the city walls, the magic machines would automatically sense them, and automatically open fire.

The construction of the city walls weren't something that could just be completed in one or two days. However...with General Jason and General Harvey, there was absolutely no problem at all. The enemy didn't dare to attack in the short term, and with General Jason and Harvey defending and attacking, Dawn City would be protected so that it was as stable as Mt. Tai.

The end of the year was just about to arrive, and Suo Jia was almost 14 years old now. Having left Holy Light for so long, Suo Jia honestly somewhat missed home. Before, Dawn hadn't yet been set on the right track, and the battles had been hard-pressed. This made it impossible for him to leave. However, it was different now. Since he'd been gone for so long, it was about time for him to go back.

Suo Jia passed down orders to continue holding fast without stopping, putting all their efforts into constructing the walls. At the same time, they were to use the excavated stones to build new houses. As for what to construct them into, Suo Jia didn't go into

detail. Either way, these houses were for them to live in, so it was fine to let them build them however they wanted. Suo Jia's only request was for them to leave a wide street with all the buildings neatly lined up along it. The positions of the buildings had been decided ages ago. There would be a total of 4 residential districts, and the buildings could only be constructed in those areas.

After arranging everything, Suo Jia rushed over to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' training area, and pushed the room's door open. All the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were quietly cultivating their battle qi. When they saw Suo Jia come in, they all flocked around him, since they knew that Suo Jia would be training if nothing was going on. If he came here, it meant that he had something to instruct them to do.

As expected, Suo Jia said in a low voice, "During the past year, we've been fighting the whole time. Or well..we've been attacked by the enemy. But everyone has already seen the current situation; we have won."

The girls couldn't help but happily smile at these words. Suo Jia looked at everyone's bright expression, and abruptly turned extremely serious as he stressed, "But, although we have won, that absolutely doesn't mean we can just let it go like that. Dawn isn't a place that fights them only when they want to fight, and is willing to let them go when they want to run. If we don't properly reciprocate them, people would all come to Dawn to behave atrociously then run."

"Mhm...." Duo Mei nodded in agreement and said, "That's right, we aren't pushovers that they can just hit a few times then leave

when they feel like it. If they dare to move a finger, then we'll break an arm. That way, we can warn them that those kinds of attempts don't benefit them in any way.

Duo Mei looked at Suo Jia respectfully and said, "Young Master, just tell us what we should do. We'll listen to you...."

"Hehe..." Suo Jia chuckled darkly and said through gritted teeth, "Since they came to attack us, then there's no need to hold back. It is impolite to not reciprocate. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes are to all go out and destroy all the thief groups near Dawn City. None are to be spared. Remember...even without my orders, any thieves that invade us are to be completely slaughtered."

Hearing Suo Jia's bloodthirsty words, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all clenched their hands into fists with piercing gazes flashing in their eyes. Suo Jia then continued, "Also, eliminate any groups you encounter that are related to Oz City. Any people shipping merchandise from or to Oz City are our targets to rob from. We'll do anything that'll harm Oz City."

"Understood." Duo Mei clapped her hands together and said, "No need to speak any further, Young Master. I understand what you're saying. Just watch us, we'll definitely meet your satisfaction."

"Mm..." Suo Jia nodded and smiled, "I'm going to leave for a while and return to Holy Light City to see my mother. I'll hand everything here to Duo Mei. If you need to, the 80,000 slave soldiers, 5000 pike users, and 5000 Velociraptor Knights are all under your command. Don't be afraid of getting into trouble;

there's nobody in Holy Light Empire that falls under our consideration. Even if you stir up an enormous disaster, I will definitely resolve it."

At this, Duo Mei's eyes grew brighter. Although she very much wanted to return to Holy Light with Suo Jia, she knew that Holy Light City was Suo Jia's home. If he was leaving, he needed someone close to him to look after the place, and she was the person Suo Jia trusted the most.

A few days later, Suo Jia, Aimi, and Aila left with Dragon Knights hired by Holy Light City to head back. On the same day, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes also left to begin their expected operations.

They headed out at dawnbreak, and the journey was without incident. By afternoon, Suo Jia's group had returned to Holy Light City. After seeing the familiar streets of Holy Light, Suo Jia momentarily let the past that seemed ages ago flash through his mind.

After leaving the government post, Suo Jia directly returned to the White Villa. After hearing that their Young Master had returned, Lan Ruo lead the group of maids to wait at the entrance ahead of time. For a while, the people passing by couldn't help but look over. Exactly what kind of bigshot would summon so many of White Villa's people? Could it be His Majesty, the Emperor?

Everyone watched as a golden and jade chariot drove down the street and entered the great gates of the White Willa. At the same time, a large number of honor guards respectfully greeted it,

welcoming the carriage in.

After coming down from the carriage, Suo Jia hugged Lan Ruo with a smile, he didn't pay mind to anything else, and directly rushed over to the wooden house his mother lived in. After being away from home for so long, the one he missed the most was still his mother...

Suo Jia pushed open the door and looked at his mother with tear-filled eyes. She was sitting on a wooden chair with a warm smile on her face as she silently looked back at Suo Jia. After standing there stunned for a long time, Suo Jia was finally unable to hold back, and bounded forwards to charge straight into his mother's embrace. The two of them remained there in a tight hug.

Although she was almost 40 years old now, his mother's face definitely wasn't any inferior to a teen's after experiencing Suo Jia's miraculous treatment. She had the kind of mature beauty that young girls couldn't compare to; there were many things that were passed down by the years that even Suo Jia couldn't recreate.

Suo Jia stayed at home for a few days, and stayed by his mother's side every day. They'd window shop along the streets, and go out to watch the sunrise and sunset together. A week later, Suo Jia finally accepted Wen Ya's invitation to meet with her and her husband, the Fourth Prince, at Duke Wen Sha's mansion.

Inside the living room of Wen Sha's mansion, Suo Jia was sitting on the sofa with a smile on his face. Wen Ya and the Fourth Prince sat across from him with solemn expressions on their faces that clearly indicated that they wanted to say something. But Suo Jia

waited for a long time, yet the two of them didn't say a single word.

Finally, Suo Jia helplessly sighed and said, "Ai... Wen Ya, we're so close already. If there's anything you need to say, you can just say it directly. Can you please stop making it so awkward?"

Wen Ya exchanged glances with the Fourth Prince, then nodded and said with difficulty, "Suo Jia, recently...the Emperor's actions seem to be a bit strange. He abolished the First Prince's and the Third Prince's right of inheritance. What's going on here?"

Chapter 248: Shocking Change (Part 2)

“Mm.” Suo Jia frowned in confusion. Although he knew what was going on, he didn’t understand why Wen Ya was asking him about it. Unless...they knew of something.

No matter what, Suo Jia couldn’t possibly let them know of his secret agreement with the old man Emperor. Suo Jia said cautiously, “Is that right? Such a thing is actually happening? That really is strange...but why did you two come find me just for that?”

The Fourth Prince looked straight into Suo Jia’s eyes and said in a heavy voice, “That’s right...we came to find you precisely because of this matter. In reality, the abrupt change only happened after Father had a secret conversation with you. Before...he really doted on the First Prince.”

The Fourth Prince abruptly paused. At the same time, Wen Ya said with a cold expression, “Suo Jia, you and the Emperor were together for quite a while during that period of time. Do you know anything...?”

Wen Ya stopped before finishing her words, however...her meaning was already quite clear. Seeing the looks on Wen Ya’s and the Fourth Prince’s faces, Suo Jia knew that the words he had exchanged with the Emperor that day had definitely been leaked out. However, he didn’t know exactly how much of it had been exposed.

Suo Jia smiled and shook his head, “I don’t understand what

you're talking about. The Emperor and I indeed talked for a long time, but...that doesn't have relevance to him abolishing the First Prince's and the Third Prince's rights of inheritance. I think...that if you want to ask me about this matter, I am unable to answer."

The Fourth Prince's expression suddenly turned dark as he said, "Suo Jia, it's best if you get this straight; we wouldn't go look for you without good cause. The reason we came was because we got ahold of some information. You'd better think it through properly before replying."

Suo Jia shuddered once, and he stared at the Fourth Prince in disbelief with eyes that glinted intelligently. After a long time, he narrowed his eyes and said, "What, did the Fourth Prince come to interrogate me?"

Faced with Suo Jia's question, the Fourth Prince looked at Suo Jia with a severe look and nodded his head imposingly. He then stated in a chilling voice, "If you really think that, then go ahead. No matter what, I want to know the content of your conversation with the Emperor that day."

"Phew..." Suo Jia let loose a breath and turned around to say to Wen Ya, "What. Does Sister Wen Ya also want to interrogate me with His Highness, the Fourth Prince?"

Wen Ya couldn't help but lower her head, not daring to meet Suo Jia's gaze. She was silent for a long time before she said weakly, "Suo Jia, we also don't want to do this. But this matter is really too important. I hope that you can tell us what you two discussed that day."

“Haha.” Suo Jia couldn’t help but let out a chuckle as he leaned back against his chair and said with a smile, “In that case, this matter is much simpler.”

Seeing Suo Jia’s smiling face, the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya also revealed happy expressions. They believed that Suo Jia was about to confess; the content of his conversation with the Emperor that day would soon be completely revealed.

As the two waited in anticipation, Suo Jia’s smile suddenly fell and he said icily, “If you guys viewed me as a friend and wanted to ask me on a good note, then I’d definitely tell you whatever I knew. But now, you two have come to interrogate me. In that case, fine...if you don’t view me as a friend anymore, then we’ll just go on and carry out our official business according to official principles without involving private interests.”

Suo Jia stood up and his voice went up an octave, “A person must be reasonable. I indeed talked a lot with His Majesty, the Emperor that day, but...I have no need to inform you two about what exactly we discussed.”

Suo Jia turned around to face the window and said firmly, “Alright. I think...since we’ve already reached this point, I won’t bother keeping you two. From today onwards, the White Villa will not welcome you.”

“You!” Hearing Suo Jia’s words, the Fourth Prince abruptly jumped up and said furiously, “Brat, don’t refuse a toast only to be

forced to drink a forfeit. I only tried to properly talk with you face to face because you've helped Wen Ya before. If you really refuse to accept my goodwill, then don't blame me for what happens after."

Suo Jia said in a chilling voice, "Fourth Prince has really awe-inspiring authority, really fierce. I must have really been f*cking blind if I had bothered to even help a person like you."

"Suo Jia." Wen Ya jumped up and shouted, "How could you do such a thing to me?! I've always treated you as my real younger brother, but you..."

"Tch..." Suo Jia grimaced in disdain and said in a tone of contempt, "Real brother. Don't make me laugh, do you really take me for a child? Did you think that I wasn't aware that Lan Ruo and the other maids were spies that you had arranged? During the past year, you've taken away so much of White Villa's money. Did you really think you could keep that from me?"

Wen Ya's face grew deathly pale at this, and was unable to utter a single word. After a long time, the Fourth Prince said, "That's right, in order to set up my subordinates, I indeed spent quite a bit of White Villa's money. However...let me make one thing clear; if it weren't for the fact that I was protecting you from the shadows and helped you get past the critical phase, do you really think you would've been able to earn that much money?"

The Fourth Prince's expression darkened and he gave a strange smile, "However, I still need to thank you. Originally...I wasn't confident in my ability to fight for the throne. If it weren't for you, I definitely wouldn't even dare to think about it. But since you've

helped me gain so much money and raised such powerful subordinates, what do I have to fear? I'd even dare to use military force to seize the throne at this point."

Hearing the Fourth Prince's words, Suo Jia's heart skipped a beat. He narrowed his eyes and pressed, "What exactly are you trying to say?"

"Hahahaha...." The Fourth Prince suddenly raised his head and laughed out loud. He then excitedly jeered, "Brat, you couldn't have possibly thought that your subordinates really vowed loyalty and devotion to you, right? You're just a snot-nosed brat; on what basis would they follow you? Also...did you think the imperial family's personal squadron, the fire wind warriors, would be so easily swindled away?"

"What.?! " Hearing the Fourth Prince's words, Suo Jia abruptly stood up and stated incredulously, "That's definitely impossible. Don't even try thinking that you can separate the relationship between me and the fire wind warriors."

"Haha..." The Fourth Prince smirked at Suo Jia and lightly clapped his hands. The next instant...a large group of red and gold-robed figures silently pushed open the doors and walked into the living room.

"You...you girls." As he watched the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes appear before him one after another, Suo Jia was completely stunned. He didn't understand, what exactly was going on? How had things become like this?

Faced with Suo Jia's questioning look, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all lowered their heads, not daring to meet his gaze. It was at this time that the Fourth Prince's voice rang out again, "General Harvey, General Jason, you should both come out to meet Viscount Suo Jia."

Two tall and straight figures quietly walked through the doors, and were revealed to be General Jason and General Harvey, who should've been protecting Dawn City. Seeing this scene, Suo Jia fell hard into his seat...

Chapter 249: Pain Of Betrayal (Part 1)

Suo Jia wordlessly stared at those extremely familiar faces. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, but was unable to say anything. He looked at the people's ashamed faces, then looked back at Fourth Prince's complacent smirk. After thinking about it for a bit, Suo Jia soon realized what had happened.

From the beginning, the Fourth Prince had watched Suo Jia closely. When the fire wind warriors were spirited away by Suo Jia, it may have been unknown to most people, but Lan Ruo couldn't possibly have been unaware. As Lan Ruo was the leader of the 6 maids in the White Villa and Wen Ya's trusted aide, Wen Ya naturally knew of anything that Lan Ruo knew of. Of course, if Wen Ya knew anything, the Fourth Prince would definitely learn of it as well.

It was clear to see that the Fourth Prince had planned everything since the beginning. He'd let Suo Jia develop the plans, while he used his own abilities and influence in the background to help lead Suo Jia forwards to break through the critical phase and fulfill all his plans. Otherwise, Suo Jia would've never suddenly risen to power so smoothly.

In addition, while it seemed like Suo Jia's intelligence had been what led him to his leading position today, Suo Jia only knew how to do this because of Lan Ruo's suggestions. Strictly speaking, the Fourth Prince had managed to take control of Suo Jia's mind through Lan Ruo; it was really too frightening.

Suo Jia had to admit that as a prince, and a future owner of Holy

Light Empire, the Fourth Prince's charisma was much greater than his own. As long as the Fourth Prince tried, he'd be able to automatically gain any person's loyalty and devotion. This included the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes.

Just as Eldest Sister, or Lan Ruo, had said, the Fourth Prince was able to satisfy anything his subordinates desired as the future owner of Holy Light Empire. In this respect, Suo Jia just couldn't compare. The Fourth Prince could grant everyone nobility if they respected him, but Suo Jia definitely didn't have this ability.

However, although he knew this, Suo Jia was still feeling great pain in his heart. It had been 6 years, almost 7 now, that he and the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had spent day and night together, yet he couldn't compete in power or money. It was really too disappointing.

Suo Jia's eyes glistened with tears as he shook his head and said, "Duo Mei, can you please explain to me just what is going on here? Why would you all betray me? What...."

Duo Mei's body shook. Although she didn't raise her head, large drops of tears continued to fall from within her red cloak. It was evident that Duo Mei also felt it hard to take.

Duo Mei finally answered Suo Jia, "Young Master, long before we met you...we had already pledged loyalty and devotion to the Fourth Prince. During the past 6 years, we've seen Fourth Prince even more often than Young Master."

“Bang.” Suo Jia’s mind mentally exploded. It turned out that while it had looked like he was controlling everything, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had regarded the Fourth Prince as their master.

As Suo Jia began to feel dizzy, Duo Mei continued to say, “Originally...we had received the Fourth Prince’s orders to diligently assist Young Master as best as possible, and go on errands for Young Master. But it’s clear to see that now the Young Master has broken off relations with the Fourth Prince, so...”

Suo Jia let loose a breath and smiled, “In other words, your interaction with me this whole time has been sincere, right.”

The girls all raised their heads and looked at Suo Jia resolutely. They could declare anything untrue but...their feelings towards Suo Jia were definitely sincere, without any utility mixed in.

“Very good...” Suo Jia smiled and nodded as he wiped away the tears that were rolling down his face, “At this point, I don’t have anything else to say. It’s really hilarious how I’ve been working so hard these past few years, yet everyone went off with him instead.”

Suo Jia turned around and said to the Fourth Prince, “I have to admit that compared to you, I’m indeed quite lacking. I was unknowingly just dancing around in the palm of your hand, and had even thought highly of myself. You’ve won.”

“Hmph.” Arrogantly snorting, the Fourth Prince said in disdain,

“You may think you’re smart, but you don’t realize that even though you’re intelligent, you’re still just a child. Those puny schemes of yours couldn’t possibly stay hidden from adults. All I had to do was look at them, and your every action could easily be guessed by me. Haha...you can’t go against me yet, you’re too inexperienced.”

The Fourth Prince said coldly, “By now, I’m sure you’re aware of everything, so just say it...what exactly did you discuss with the Emperor that day?”

Suo Jia expressionlessly shook his head and said flatly, “Not possible. I’m not an immoral person that just changes sides over and over. You’ve made an error in judgment.”

“Hmph.” The Fourth Prince snorted and said chillingly, “You think that if you don’t tell me, I can’t discover the truth of the matter? Let me tell you straight out, actually, I already know most of the content of your discussion that day. I know...that you enticed the Emperor by doubling his life span, making that old man depose all the princes. Tell me, am I wrong?”

“You.” Suo Jia raised his head in shock and stared at the Fourth Prince in fear. He really couldn’t understand, just how had the Fourth Prince figured out everything? The palace definitely had spies. It looked like...the old man Emperor was in danger.

Seeing Suo Jia’s astonished expression, the Fourth Prince said darkly, “Right now, you only have two choices: the first is to become my subordinate, and serve only me, following my commands. The second is to die this instant. As long as I shatter

the Emperor's hope, I'll definitely be able to successfully succeed the throne."

Suo Jia didn't even bat an eyelid and replied blankly, "It looks like you've prepared quite a bit. That must mean my mother has also fallen into your hands."

The Fourth Prince nodded and sinisterly said, "We're both intelligent people. I obviously dealt with such a minor matter appropriately. Don't worry, your mother is fine right now. She probably still doesn't even know what's happened here. Her circumstances however, are directly linked to your choice."

The Fourth Prince paused for a moment before bursting out, "Alright, truthfully speaking, there are feelings between us, and I'm unwilling to kill you. It's best if you just conform to the circumstances and work for me. As long as you're willing to vow loyalty and devotion to me, I guarantee that your life won't be any different from what it was like before."

The Fourth Prince arrogantly puffed out his chest and said in high spirits, "When I become Emperor, I'll return everything back to you. With our relation, I guarantee that your noble rank will last for thousands of generations, and your wealth and riches will be eternal. I can give you everything the Emperor gave you. How about it? Think it through well; like I've said, we're both smart people, so you should know what to choose."

"Pfft..." Suo Jia spat in contempt, "Since you've already stated that we're both intelligent people, why bother putting up false pretenses? Just tell me directly; you've got your sights on the

Emperor's throne, as well as having a prolonged life of over a hundred years, right?"

"Hahaha..." The Fourth Prince laughed. He stopped trying to conceal his thoughts and nodded, "That's right, it's exactly as you say. It's not just me, Wen Ya needs your help as well. In reality, there's no need to be concerned about anything. Just come over to my side. We can create a glorious dynasty together."

"Sigh..." Suo Jia bitterly smiled, "The prospects you're portraying are fine indeed, but do you know why I would prefer to choose the old man Emperor, and not be your assisting partner?"

"Hm." The Fourth Prince looked at Suo Jia in confusion and frowned, "That's a question I pondered over for a long time. I don't understand why you still choose him, and not someone like me that you're more familiar with."

"Haha..." Suo Jia smiled and shook his head, and flatly said, "Actually, it's not much. Simply put, I just don't like or admire you. You think that you're so smart, but you don't understand; that kind of intelligence you show on the outside is you being sharp but petty-minded. What I admire instead is wisdom. I won't ever serve you, even if I die."

Suo Jia slowly stood up, and powerful magic power surged out violently from Suo Jia, and dispersed outwards. At the same time, Suo Jia roared in anger, "I'm going to leave this place right now. If anyone dares to stop me, go ahead and try. Since we're enemies, there's no reason to hold back."

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all raised their heads at Suo Jia's shout and looked at him unwillingly. They knew clearly that Suo Jia said that in order to dispel their apprehensions. After interacting with each other for so long, Suo Jia still didn't have the heart to make it hard for them in front of their master, even at this final point.

"Young Master..." Finally, Duo Mei cried out lowly, choked with emotion.

"Hmph." Without waiting for Suo Jia to reply, the Fourth Prince declared, "Suo Jia, even if you manage to escape from here, do you really not care about your mother's life? You can run, but how can she run?"

Suo Jia coldly glanced at the Fourth Prince and grounded out, "Even now, you still want to blackmail me with my mother? Too bad, you're too late. Truthfully speaking, Aimi and Aila have already escorted my mother out. Even if you want to threaten me with my mother, you can't possibly do it anymore."

"That's impossible," the Fourth Prince cried out in shock, "I've already sealed off White Villa. Even if they grew wings, they couldn't possibly fly out. Don't even dream of lying to me."

Suo Jia smiled and narrowed his eyes in contempt, "In reality, the reason I came back this time was to bring my mother to Dawn Fort. A few days ago, Aimi and Aila accompanied her off in the darkness while we were outside taking a walk. The only person in

your grasp right now is Mother's stand-in."

The Fourth Prince's expression suddenly changed and he asked incredulously, "How is that possible? Just now, someone notified me and said that your mother was indeed in White Villa. How...."

"Haha..." Suo Jia chuckled and explained, "It's really nothing major. Since you understand me so well, you should naturally know that I have the Dark Angels thief group under me. Those guys are slave soldiers that have committed heavy crimes. Even if I lost everyone else, I still have tons of those kinds of tricks. I hadn't thought that I'd actually be able to conceal it from His Royalness, the Fourth Prince."

The Fourth Prince's expression finally changed and Suo Jia smiled just then, "In reality, I wanted to establish a completely secret corps a while ago that only represented me ages ago. But after going around trying to set it up, I was still unable to escape the palm of your hand. Thus, the slave soldiers caught my eye."

"That..." The Fourth Prince's body shook as he subconsciously replied, "That's right, no matter what, I wouldn't have ever come into contact with the slave soldiers. After all... there are so many of them, and they're all of low status. Even if I wanted to search for your subordinates, I wouldn't have searched the slave soldiers."

The Fourth Prince raised his head and looked at Suo Jia, "No wonder you created 5-6 groups in succession, with the Green Angels and Golden Angels and whatnot all day. It turns out that you were just trying to establish one branch that would escape my vision this whole time, a corps that represents only you."

Suo Jia nodded and replied in affirmation, “In order to successfully keep the secret, I sent them away as pretext the day I established the groups, then secretly raised their status with the nobility grants so that they became normal citizens. Now...they’ve completely become armed forces under me already.”

The Fourth Prince sighed in praise and applauded Suo Jia, “Your thinking was really quite sharp. To think that you really established a group that I couldn’t possibly access. Even though this group isn’t much, you do have quite a few tricks up your sleeve, and managed to make a proficient scheme.”

Suo Jia straightened his body, seemingly prepared to leave. At the same time, Suo Jia continued to say, “In reality, there are still many things you don’t know about. Don’t think of yourself as some God, because you’re not anywhere close.”

Suo Jia glanced at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and said in pain, “However, I have to admit that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes’ betrayal far surpassed my expectations, so I did lose to one of your schemes.”

“Hehe...” The Fourth Prince sneered conceitedly.

“However...” Seeing the Fourth Prince’s smug expression, Suo Jia continued frostily, “Since you really dared to hand the 5000 Velociraptor Knights over to me, you have to admit that you lost to one of my tricks too.”

“Huh?” The Fourth Prince looked at Suo Jia in confusion and asked, “What do you mean by that? You helped train them so well for me, and even made the best armors for them. What did I lose?”

Suo Jia coldly looked back at Fourth Prince and stated, “The armors are indeed quite good. However...there’s something that you probably don’t know about them; I haven’t paid for the armors yet, hahaha....”

“Tch...” The Fourth Prince smirked conceitedly and said, “And here I thought it was something major. Isn’t it just some money? All I had to is hand it over. How does that count as you winning?”

“No, no, no...” Suo Jia darkly smiled as he shook his head, “Those armors were ordered under the Velociraptor Knights’ names, and General Harvey is the one that arranged it. Although I was the one that wrote the order form, General Harvey was the one who handed it over, hehe...”

“What exactly are you trying to get at?” The Fourth Prince furrowed his brows impatiently.

Suo Jia glanced over and smiled evilly, “Nothing really, just...the items on the order form used up all the expensive heavy metals that the dwarves had accumulated over thousands of years. Originally, I was going to use my relationship with the old man Emperor and ensure the Empire pay for it. But now, this money will definitely have to be paid by you. I just don’t know whether you can afford it.”

“Tch...” The Fourth Prince tsked in disdain and said loosely, “Sorry, I never really thought much about money. Isn’t it just some change? I would never pay any mind to that.”

“Papapa...” Suo Jia clapped in praise and stated, “The Fourth Prince really is the Fourth Prince, managing to even ignore the cost of one hundred trillion gold. I can’t say anything except for words of respect. If you just turn around and discuss with Duke Wen Sha about selling Holy Light City, you’ll pretty much have just enough.”

“What. WHAT. ONE HUNDRED TRILLION?!” Although he didn’t ever think about money, the value of that much money was something ridiculous even to someone that normally ignored money like the Fourth Prince.

Suo Jia gave a fake smile and nodded, “That’s right. Originally, I had planned to use the Life Potions’ recipe as exchange, and then ask the Empire to pay for a portion. But the troops are now yours, so I obviously don’t need to pay it anymore. Thank you for your trouble from now on, Fourth Prince.”

“You...I...that...” As the Fourth Prince looked at Suo Jia’s beaming smile, he finally began to panic. He could afford it, but if he really took the money out, he’d immediately become a penniless beggar.

“Oh. Right...” While the Fourth Prince was still in shock, Suo Jia suddenly slapped his forehead and shouted, “I forgot to tell His Royalness, the Fourth Prince. Those Life Potions probably won’t be produced anymore. That machine requires a secret code to be

inputted every year. I was originally supposed to input it when I came back this time, but some things put it off. Now it looks like I won't need to input it anymore."

"Plop..." The Fourth Prince fell back hard on his seat, his entire body trembling. He had to repay such a massive amount of debt, to the point where he'd even lose a golden goose. This was a serious injury. Suo Jia had actually burned the secret recipe ages ago, so he was the only one in the entire world that knew it. And according to the current situation, Suo Jia was clearly not going to tell it to the Fourth Prince.

The Fourth Prince stretched out a trembling hand and said darkly, "It's not too late yet. If I capture you, I can get past everything. Someone...seize him!"

Chapter 250: Pain Of Betrayal (Part 2)

Faced with the Fourth Prince's orders, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all shook, but none came forward to capture Suo Jia. Only General Harvey and General Jason didn't hesitate. They drew the swords from their waist, and attacked Suo Jia.

Suo Jia gratefully glanced at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, and his tears finally began to overflow. He stamped his right foot down and instantly activated the Diamond Charge. At the same time, Suo Jia quickly leapt forward, his body twisting in a strange way as he jumped up like an agile fish, instantly cleaving the air.

Suo Jia stood arrogantly in midair and coldly declared, "I've already said you aren't God, you can't possibly know everything. I can tell you right now that the things you don't know far outnumber the things you do know."

Suo Jia abruptly turned around to look at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, "I didn't let you girls use the Fire Phoenix equipment set before, and you didn't really understand why back then. Now... I'll show you all one last demonstration. Hiding your strength is the only true way to stay alive when you are in dire straits."

Suo Jia suddenly spread apart his arms, and his magic robe strongly billowed outwards. The sound of silk splitting pierced the air as the robe tore into pieces, revealing the armor under it.

"Si..." With a light whiz, a white mist slowly drifted around Suo Jia's body. There was an armor that emitted a blue glow covering

him. Those flowing lines, intricate designs, and hazy yet beautiful glow could only mean one thing: Suo Jia's Atlantis set had been miraculously completed.

“Whoosh...” A scarlet cloak billowed outwards despite the lack of wind, and it shot out straight from Suo Jia's back. At the same time, Suo Jia looked at the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and said, “Aside from me, nobody else knows that I've finished gathering the Atlantis equipment set. And this...is my last advantage.”

As Suo Jia leisurely floated in midair, General Harvey and Jason blocked Diamond Charge. They once again leapt up while brandishing their swords as they charged at Suo Jia, attempting to capture him.

Seeing the two figures charging at him as fast as lightning, Suo Jia just frowned in disdain. Although General Harvey and Jason were both experts that had trained in military arts for over 40 years, endured many battles, and gained a lot of experience, they were still only wearing normal armor. In addition, it was just the generic military wear that training soldiers wore.

Although Suo Jia wasn't sure if he could directly kill them both off, and engaging in battle might eliminate his chance to flee...just running away wasn't that difficult. With a wave of his right hand, a blue light flashed, and an Ice Roar was instantly activated.

Aside from the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, who remained entirely still, General Harvey, Jason, and even the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya all scattered in panic to evade the devastating Ice Roar. Those flying ice blades were flying out indiscriminately.

Although he was forced to take shelter and was stuck in a miserable state, the Fourth Prince still refused to admit his loss, and he shouted, “Suo Jia, don’t be too unruly. Let me tell you now, I’ve already arranged for hundreds of experts to wait outside. You can’t possibly escape.”

“Oh,” Suo Jia looked at the Fourth Prince in astonishment and said sincerely, “Then I must really thank you for warning me. Since there are so many people outside, I’ll just leave from the top.” Suo Jia stretched his hand towards the room’s roof, and an ice stream about as large as a person leapt outwards like a flood dragon. With a violent bang, it blasted a cavity a bit wider than a person into the ceiling. At the same time, Suo Jia followed behind the ice stream and flew out from the window as fast as lightning.

The Fourth Prince was completely stunned by how Suo Jia had left the room so easily. He finally regained his senses and shouted in fury, “Hurry. Quickly go and chase after him, and capture him.”

Despite the Fourth Prince’s orders, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes still didn’t move. Their disloyalty to Suo Jia had already made them feel beyond ashamed. Making them go and seize Suo Jia now was something that they’d never do, even if they died.

Suo Jia turned around, but was faced with 36 pairs of misty, tear-filled eyes, which caused him to abruptly turn back around. A whistle rose into the air as Suo Jia swiftly stepped upwards, instantly rising to a frightening height.

When he looked back down, he saw countless figures quickly gathering together. However...Suo Jia's current location was just too high up. Unless archers shot at him, it was impossible for the other party to touch him.

Suo Jia shot a pained look at the people below him and his resentful voice rang out, "Fourth Prince, this debt is one that I, Suo Jia, will never forget. You know my personal character well; I never owe anyone, let alone allow others to owe me. Just you wait, there will come a day where I will return and get my revenge. When that time comes, I'll be taking back what you owe me with interest."

"Roar. Roar. Roar..." A low roaring sound came from the distance. When Suo Jia turned around, he saw the figures of a few Wind Dragon Knights in the air.

"Aha..." The Fourth Prince grew smug again after seeing the Wind Dragon Knights approach, "It looks like this debt is something you won't get a chance to repay. Show me just how you plan on running away under these circumstances."

Suo Jia ignored the Fourth Prince and stretched out his left hand. A bright, silver light flashed, and Suo Jia's body magically disappeared in midair. At the same time, his voice could be heard, "Your Royal Highness, the Fourth Prince, make sure to remember what you owe me, and wait for a bit. I'll definitely be back."

The Fourth Prince stared in shock at where Suo Jia had stood in midair. He just couldn't understand how Suo Jia had suddenly disappeared. A long time passed before the Fourth Prince suddenly

remembered that there seemed to be a type of magic items that could conceal the body.

Since Suo Jia had escaped alive, the coup d'état had to begin immediately. The Fourth Prince knew that there was already no more time to prepare. If he didn't act quickly, Suo Jia would notify the Emperor, and then the Fourth Prince would be doomed. With the old man Emperor's power, the Fourth Prince would be dealt with before the coup d'état even started if the Emperor caught wind of the situation.

During the following 3 days, the Fourth Prince and all the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes rushed to the capital with the help of the Wind Dragon Knights. The 5000 Velociraptor Knights had used their storm-like speed to rush over 3000 li in only 3 days over dry land to the capital. By successfully borrowing the cover of the night, they managed to enter the city under the Fourth Prince's arrangements.

That evening, the Fourth Prince initiated the coup d'état, as fast as rolling thunder. Although the old man Emperor was somewhat prepared, the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all wore semi Epic ranked equipment sets, had the four colored potions, and elements of both fire and wind. They also had the aid of the 5000 Velociraptors' fierce, all-out attacks, and in just an hour, the palace had completely fallen.

One couldn't say that the old man Emperor had been unprepared. But such an overpowering attack was basically unstoppable. While the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes couldn't destroy the palace's experts, they could hold them up by borrowing the power of their

semi Epic ranked equipment sets. On the other hand, the other court soldiers couldn't possibly be the 5000 Velociraptor Knights' match. Victory was inevitable.

The next morning, when all the chancellors had been going to attend the court as usual, the old man Emperor sadly announced his abdication of the throne, granting it to the Fourth Prince. Thus, Holy Light Empire changed to a new generation monarch.

The first thing the Fourth Prince did as soon as he gained the throne was to have the whole empire search for Suo Jia. Anyone that caught or killed him would be rewarded a billion gold, have their status raised to a Duke, and also be conferred a piece of land that they were free to choose.

Afterwards, the Fourth Prince also rewarded the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes that had helped him successfully pull his coup d'etat. He knew that even though he had gained the throne, staying there required these powerful female warriors to stay by his side and protect him.

As for the 5000 Velociraptor Knights, they had taken the place of the original palace guards, and taken up the important responsibility of protecting the palace. With the 5000 Velociraptor Knights present, the palace was extremely well-fortified. The experts could be dealt with by the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, while the Velociraptor Knights could go against an army. The Fourth Prince could only sigh in praise at how talented Suo Jia was. It was a pity that such a formidable person wasn't willing to serve him, and instead became his greatest enemy.

Up until now, the Fourth Prince had felt fully content with his achievements. Wen Ya also got her wish of becoming the Holy Light Empire's Empress fulfilled, and Duke Wen Sha became part of the Prince's assisting government. However...not all of them were happy.

Duo Mei despondently sat on a cushion, blankly staring at the air in front of her. Betraying Suo Jia had been the most agonizing thing to her, but...as a citizen of Holy Light, she and her sisters had sworn loyalty and devotion to the Fourth Prince the day they had first entered the academy. That's why, although Suo Jia had been so kind to them, they were trapped in the Fourth Prince's plans. What could they do?

In addition, the Fourth Prince could give them wealth, glory, privileges, status, and anything else they desired. He'd even agreed to helping them maintain their appearances. Suo Jia had already set up everything perfectly, all the Fourth Prince needed to do was to maintain it.

Now, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes all had noble ranks, and had halos of glory above their heads. The privileges within their grasp had also increased, along with their status. However, the girls discovered that they not only weren't happy, but instead felt so empty and lonesome that they were about to go insane.

Although they hadn't been able to see Suo Jia every day when they were together with him, more like a few days' chance per year, they would spend these days together very richly, dynamically, happily. But now, they suddenly discovered why they were at a loss. They couldn't see any goal ahead of them, nor any

type of hope.

Every day, they recalled how well Suo Jia had treated them, and would then find themselves utterly isolated. The girls couldn't help but feel miserable, as they all understood that they had bitten the hand that had fed them.

The sudden change that had occurred made the girls completely lose their capability of judgment. In reality, if Suo Jia had stood up and told them he'd bring them away, with him that day, they wouldn't have known how to respond. It was to the point where, if Suo Jia had ordered them to forcibly kick the Fourth Prince out, it was highly likely that they would've obeyed Suo Jia's commands.

However, Suo Jia hadn't said nor acted in such a way. He had only grievously left alone. He didn't realized that in actuality, even though the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had pledged loyalty and devotion to the Fourth Prince, they'd never be willing to betray Suo Jia either. Originally...they had thought that Suo Jia and the Fourth Prince would be allies for the rest of their lives. With the sudden fall-out that day, nobody could blame the girls for not knowing what to do. The Fourth Prince was definitely superior; while the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had hesitated, he'd taken the initiative to act, and Suo Jia had backed down.

But the girls all knew that the reason Suo Jia had conceded was to make things less difficult for them. If Suo Jia had also gone up and demanded for them to seize the Fourth Prince, what would they have been supposed to do? Exactly who were they supposed to have listened to? No matter what choice they had made, it would've been tormenting.

As she thought of Suo Jia's various good points, Duo Mei grew more and more heart-broken. She looked around at her companions, and...saw that all the girls' eyes were brimming with tears. After all, who in this world enjoyed betrayal?

Author's Note:

In regards to the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, I already said ages ago that they are part of the imperial family's guards, which had been set the moment they were born. They had pledged loyalty and devotion to the imperial family the day they entered Holy Light Academy, which I'm sure doesn't need any further explanation. The only reason Suo Jia's swindling away of these girls was successful was because it had been secretly coordinated by the Fourth Prince.

Some people say that I didn't hint beforehand about the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' betrayal, but that is an irrational claim. Many friends had already seen through it. Why could they fake their deaths so easily, and why did nobody suspect them? In reality, this was all being controlled by the Fourth Prince.

The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes' loyalty towards the imperial family isn't fake, nor are their feelings towards Suo Jia. Exactly whether it was betrayal or not still hasn't been concluded. Actually, from the moment they were discovered to be fire wind warriors, they were forced to vow devotion to the imperial family, and were taught to stay loyal no matter what since they were young. This point was something that a ruler could never let go of. Did all this not count as foreshadowing?

Perhaps I buried it too deeply for everyone to see it. But there's no way it can be said that it wasn't there. If you remain unconvinced, go back now to the beginning and closely read anything involving the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. You'll discover that nothing I say is false.

Moreover, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes haven't really betrayed Suo Jia at this stage. They needed to swear loyalty to both the Fourth Prince and Suo Jia, so what were they supposed to do? In addition, you can't forget that their families are actually still in the hands of the Fourth Prince.

Holy Light Empire is only a small point within the large world, a nameless little country. This isn't Suo Jia's goal. His objective is the Martial Way. In addition, if he doesn't experience some setbacks, he won't have any means of maturing.

Before writing this part, I reconsidered it many times, but still resolutely wrote it in the end. Although I know it's depressing, it is absolutely necessary. If he doesn't experience wind and rain, how will he see a rainbow? Nobody can just succeed in everything they do whenever they want. Everything Suo Jia has done has a reason behind it. This event has made Suo Jia learn of many things, building a foundation for many matters in the future.

Suo Jia actually has the ability to get rid of the Fourth Prince right now. While he can't attack him head-on, he can assassinate him secretly. However...since the Fourth Prince made Suo Jia lose everything, Suo Jia has to do the same in return. Thus, he just restrained himself, that's all.

Lastly, I would like to point out that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes aren't actually main characters, but supports of supporting roles. The true main characters, I'm sure you've all guessed already: Nicole is one, and Roger is one, which is why these fire wind warriors aren't described in much detail. If everyone continues to read onwards, you'll realize that the true main characters will definitely have unique, defining traits. The Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes didn't really betray Suo Jia, they've never fought against him, nor have they ever disobeyed any of his commands. In reality, it was Suo Jia that chose to give up.

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Taffy's Note:

While I, like many others, found the betrayal upsetting, I understood where it had come from after reading these chapters. It really does explain how Suo Jia was able to get so far without a hitch; such a thing was realistically impossible. I had always questioned how the Empire would've just let the fire wind warriors "die" so easily as well.

In a sense, like the author said, the fire wind warriors didn't exactly betray Suo Jia either, which can clearly be seen by how they didn't obey the Fourth Prince's orders to harm/seize Suo Jia. It was more of the fact that they were loyal to the Fourth Prince as well, and thus couldn't betray either, stuck in a deadlock and at loss at what to do. I honestly feel really bad for them, but what else can they do? As special existences, they had been forced to swear loyalty to the Fourth Prince since a young age, and their families

are still in his hands.

It's also extremely necessary to the plot. Essentially, everything up until now was a prologue (a really long one), marking Suo Jia's growth. This event marks the point where he really matures, and learns many valuable lessons. It's also necessary for the plot to move forwards; this event is the impetus for him to finally leave Holy Light City/Empire and head for the Greater Trade Routes. He had been hesitant this whole time because he wasn't yet strong enough, and honestly, as of now, he still isn't. However, with this turn of events, he's now forced to leave with lack of better choice. And so the main plot begins.

Next chapter will be his revenge; look forward to it xD The following chapter will be the start of the new arc, the main plot ^^

Chapter 251: Officially Setting Off (Part 1)

The Fourth Prince was able to have a taste of being the Emperor, and Wen Ya got the chance to become the Empress, just as they had both hoped. Everything seemed to have fallen right into the Fourth Prince's calculations. It looked like from now on, they could rest easy. However, was this the reality?

Suo Jia hadn't completely grasped the Fourth Prince's plots. Suo Jia was in the light after all, while the Fourth Prince was in the dark. In addition, the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya combined had extremely great power, something that Suo Jia couldn't possibly touch.

However, he refrained from hurting others, while guarding against those that harmed him. Suo Jia had already mentally prepared himself for today's circumstances. Otherwise, Suo Jia's mother would have definitely been taken away.

Suo Jia originally hadn't planned on harming the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya but...while he had given them weight loss treatment, he'd secretly left behind something.

If the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya had maintained a peaceful relationship with Suo Jia forever and worked together with absolutely sincerity, the two of them wouldn't have had any issues. They would've definitely been able to live past 100 years. But now that they had ripped apart any face, how were they supposed to earn Suo Jia's help?

Half a year after he had seized the throne, just as the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya sat down on their thrones, they began to feel something a bit off with their bodies. Moreover, their conditions seemed to be getting worse and worse.

The first one to change was Wen Ya. A person like her that was a beauty with otherworldly looks, had swelled up like a balloon. In only a short 3 months time, Wen Ya had become fat and round as a ball again. In addition, there were no visible signs of her weight increase stopping. Originally, the issue wasn't very major, but by the later weeks, Wen Ya had unexpectedly become so fat that one couldn't even tell where her thighs were. She needed to rely on people just to help her sit down and stand up.

Basically, Wen Ya had already become so fat that only her head remained. When she lied down on a bed, she would look just look like a lump of meat. Her whole body's flesh jiggled, making anyone that looked at her feel disgust; she couldn't even take proper care of herself.

Seeing how Wen Ya grew fatter with every passing day, the Fourth Prince was finally unable to endure his feelings of disgust, and slowly drifted apart from her while giving her the cold shoulder. Nothing could be done about it; Wen Ya's current appearance was so bad that even she felt disgusted when she saw herself.

Soon after, Wen Ya completely lost the honor of being the Empress. She only had a few maids remain by her side to watch over her. Her circumstances became harsher, and the Fourth Prince never came to see her again.

In reality, the reason why the Fourth Prince had chased after Wen Ya so desperately despite her fatness in the first place was to gain the favor of Duke Wen Sha. His target had been locked on the kingship. Now that he had obtained it, why would he really care about Wen Ya any longer?

Not long after she was picked up by Wen Sha, the Fourth Prince used the reason that Wen Ya's ugliness was embarrassing the country to directly abrogate her from the throne. He then married an extremely beautiful woman, and Wen Ya became an object of the past.

Wen Ya spent all day long lying on her bed, looking up listlessly at her roof as she recalled her memories. She was currently at the point where even if she wanted to die, it would be difficult to kill herself.

It could be said that Wen Ya had reaped what she had sown. Losing Suo Jia's support had lead to her losing everything, including her beauty, figure, love, glory, and status. The current Wen Ya had lost all hope, living a life worse than death.

Wen Ya had indeed suffered from a devastating attack, and this attack was something she seemed to have to suffer for the whole latter part of her life. But she wasn't the one that had become evil first; before Wen Ya had even gotten to this point, there was still the Fourth Prince.

After receiving the title of the Emperor, the Fourth Prince had

truly enjoyed his time for a period. He had the finest beauties of the entire Empire, and bedded a different woman every day. For each of the 365 days of the year, he managed to enjoy over 400 beautiful virgins.

Had Suo Jia let him go? Not really. Suo Jia had been more cautious with doing things to the Fourth Prince. Since Suo Jia and the Fourth Prince didn't meet very often, his action cycles had to be prolonged for longer. Wen Ya had gotten treatment once a year, while the Fourth Prince had gotten it twice a year.

Finally, after the Fourth Prince had been the reigning monarch for a year, he finally felt that something was a bit off. First of all, his bodily functions gradually began to decay. Within 3 days, his little guy had completely stopped working. Even though the palace was filled with thousands of beautiful virgins, the Fourth Prince couldn't grow hard, and thus couldn't enjoy them.

The most unbearable part was that the Fourth Prince felt abnormally thirsty. Whenever he saw a beautiful woman, he'd feel his blood burn passionately. However, his lower part just wouldn't cooperate with him, and didn't react at all. No matter how much he urged it, the result would never change.

He searched for multiple doctors, as well as water and light mages in attempt to be cured. However, none of them were of any use. In the end, the Fourth Prince's lower part had completely died, and even began to go through necrosis. In only a week, it had completely rotted and dropped off. From then on...the first, Western eunuch Emperor had been born.

After losing the symbol of his masculinity, the Fourth Prince even wanted to commit suicide. There were thousands of beauties in his harem, yet he could only look at them and not use them. That kind of feeling was simply impossible to describe.

It was at that time that a letter was delivered to the Fourth Prince. This letter had been sent by Suo Jia from out of the country. Suo Jia told the Fourth Prince through the letter that this was only the first wave of punishment. There was more to come, no need to worry...

After reading this letter, the Fourth Prince immediately understood: this was a ploy that Suo Jia had done on him since the very beginning. Now...Suo Jia's aspirations had born fruit.

In the letter, Suo Jia informed the Fourth Prince that originally... he could've made it so that the Fourth Prince could've just dropped dead. But Suo Jia hadn't done so because that was letting him off too easily. Since he had dared to betray Suo Jia, the Fourth Prince had to live in eternal repentance. And this was still unable to dispel Suo Jia's anger.

Suo Jia consoled the Fourth Prince over and over to take good care of his body. If that thing was gone, then it was gone; it wouldn't impact his life. He advised the Fourth Prince to cheer up, and to make sure he didn't die. Otherwise, who was Suo Jia supposed to look for revenge?

After reading Suo Jia's letter, the Fourth Prince spat tons of blood right there. However, he couldn't do anything about it. What made the Fourth Prince feel the most horrified was that the

letter had said this was only the first wave of punishment; there was still another one.

Soon after receiving the letter, the Fourth Prince was hit by the second wave. Actually, it wasn't much, just a headache that hit every 6 hours, thus four per day.

Nobody knew exactly how much it hurt, but whenever it did, the Fourth Prince would cradle his head in his hands and bang it against the wall until blood flowed down his face. If he didn't do this, he wasn't able to stop the pain.

The pain would kick in every 6 hours, and would last for 2 hours. Thus...the Fourth Prince would be in pain for over 8 hrs every day. If it wasn't for the fact that he had water and light mages following him everywhere that could treat him any time, he would've died ages ago. However...in contrast to this pain, he'd be much happier dying.

Basically, although the Fourth Prince sat on the throne, he only enjoyed the pleasures of being Emperor for one year. After that, he was completely unable to find pleasure in his life at all. Actually, he couldn't even sleep properly; since he felt pain for two hours every 6 hours, he'd be hit by a wave of pain before he was able to fall into deep sleep.

While the Fourth Prince was suffering to the point of reaching seventh heaven, the dwarves sent someone to urge him to hand over the payments. Moreover, various matters in the Holy Light Empire began to flood in. Now, the Fourth Prince finally regretted his actions. What kind of transaction was this? He had to go by

himself. If he could choose his fate right now, he'd much prefer to be a commoner all his life rather than be the Emperor.

Cutting off his head would just leave a huge scar, but Suo Jia's punishment never ended. Until the day that Fourth Prince took his last breath, this retribution would never stop.

Since the day the Fourth Prince was unable to enjoy the awesomeness of his power, he no longer even had the mood to deal with political matters. Aside from receiving Suo Jia's punishment of excruciating pain every day, he just sat there in repentance. Unfortunately, everything was already over. Even if he went to beg Suo Jia now, Suo Jia wouldn't come back here. He no longer had faith in the Fourth Prince.

By now, the pain of the betrayal had finally made its mark. Nobody had been the victor, everybody had lost. Moreover, every loss was worse than the last since there was no room for redemption.

As for Suo Jia, he had already left Holy Light Empire. He had already started his own journey. After experiencing so much, Suo Jia had finally realized that people couldn't be relied on; the Velociraptor Knights were like this, as were the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. The only one he could rely on was himself.

Chapter 252: Officially Setting Off (Part 2)

Crunch...crunch...crunch...

The crisp sound of a person walking on snow seemed much clearer on the spacious and empty plain. Suo Jia walked forward step by step, his mood not as bad as it should have been.

After leaving Holy Light City, Suo Jia had caught up to Aimi, Aila, and his mother, then escorted them back to his hometown, White Granary. Although the Fourth Prince had gained the White Villa, as well as Dawn, Suo Jia still had some money on him. After buying the largest, most luxurious castles in the town, he left behind 10 billion gold and then left the town alone.

Before he left, Suo Jia ordered Aimi and Aila to enter closed door training with all their concentration during the next three years, while also looking after his mother. They weren't to go out; hired servants would be responsible for provisions.

Although Holy Light Empire wasn't large, Suo Jia wasn't worried about his mother and the two girls being captured. The Fourth Prince's target had been locked onto Suo Jia from the beginning to end. As long as he revealed himself elsewhere to pull away all the attention towards him, and his mother, Aimi, and Aila stayed in the house, nobody in the world would be able to find them.

Originally, Suo Jia hadn't needed to fall to this extent. If he had just agreed to become the Fourth Prince's subordinate, everything would've been restored to what it was like originally, and even get

better. Suo Jia had skills, ability, and would surely help the Fourth Prince. However, he still resolutely refused to choose this.

The Fourth Prince had stood at the wrong position from the very beginning. He had calculated Suo Jia into his plans this whole time; moreover, the situation had worsened because Suo Jia had broken these plans. Although he didn't understand the Fourth Prince's exact scheme, Suo Jia knew that the Fourth Prince had always included him. It was precisely for this reason that Suo Jia was steadfast on helping the Emperor, who he wasn't as close to, rather than rely on the Fourth Prince's help.

Actually, the Fourth Prince had made another major error; he shouldn't have let Suo Jia know the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were his subordinates. Suo Jia really placed heavy importance on those girls; he'd gained not only money from them, but many emotions and hope as well. Having suddenly experienced betrayal, how was Suo Jia supposed to have been lured into the one that had incited the betrayal?

It could be said that while the Fourth Prince was smugly telling Suo Jia that the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes were his subordinates, and that Suo Jia had been manipulated that whole time, it was already impossible for Suo Jia to join him. From that moment on, the Fourth Prince had become Suo Jia's greatest enemy.

Now, Suo Jia had lost the White Villa, lost Dawn, lost the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes that he had spent so much effort to support; he'd pretty much lost everything. However, Suo Jia wasn't actually that upset; on the contrary, he had been roused. If the

Fourth Prince had taken away Suo Jia's everything, then there would come a day where he'd return and take away the Fourth Prince's everything.

Since Suo Jia now needed to draw the Fourth Prince's attention towards him, he had to reveal himself. At the same time, Suo Jia also wanted to quickly raise his strength. Otherwise, he'd never be able to regain the debt that the Fourth Prince owed him.

Although Suo Jia's goal this whole time had been the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia had never had the courage to embark on this journey. As a Great Mage, he still didn't have the qualifications to rush headlong into the Greater Trade Routes; his strength was just too lacking.

But now, new hatred piled on old. Having been forced by the circumstances, Suo Jia had to start on his journey on the Greater Trade Routes. He knew that while it was still very dangerous, this was precisely the reason why he had to do it; only then would he be able to train. Both his intelligence and strength would quickly increase.

It could be said that those who had successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes were all recorded as legendary heroes. If they could proclaim themselves hegemons on the Greater Trade Routes, they'd be like the Seven Pinnacles, Epic ranked heroes. Only then would he be able to easily achieve his desires including stealing the kingship of the Empire.

Crunch...crunch...crunch...

Advancing dauntlessly through wave upon wave of endless attacks from pursuers, Suo Jia had already wandered around various paths on the map. As he looked around at the boundless white plains, Suo Jia realized that he had already gotten lost. After over a month of being chased, Suo Jia had finally gotten the chance to take a breath. That was because...while Suo Jia had gotten lost, he'd also seemed to have shaken off his pursuers.

As a mage, Suo Jia's physical strength wasn't that good with covering long distances. If it weren't for the constant replenishment from the four colored potions, he would've collapsed from exhaustion ages ago. Now...although his energy and endurance weren't any issue, his mind was still tired. After trekking around for over a month, he needed a stable, warm place to rest for a bit.

Suo Jia suddenly stopped in his tracks. He could see his breath coming out in huffs as he perked his ears to listen closely. Soon, he heard a faint roar of a beast. At this, Suo Jia's face broke into a delighted smile.

The Megaconus was a type of magical beast that could be tamed. Although its body was small, it was extremely fast, and had an extraordinarily sensitive sense of smell. It was the nemesis of most small-sized magical beasts, and also the best assistant to hunters. The sound that Suo Jia had just heard was the roar of a Megaconus; in other words, Suo Jia had finally encountered a person.

Suo Jia quickened his pace, running towards the direction of the

sound as fast as possible. Soon...a few Megaconus figures appeared before him.

The Megaconus had a tiger's head, a dog's body, and a lion's tail. Its most unique part was the two large teeth next to its mouth. A single chomp was enough to pulverize even steel. Although it wasn't strong in 1v1 fights, if a large group of Megaconus of 5 or more fought together, any large-sized magical beast would be forced to flee. If their numbers reached 100, then they'd be basically unrivaled, aside from high-ranked magical beasts.

But in reality, the Megaconus was something only hunters would raise, because its individual strength was too low. It was at most only a middle-ranked magical beast, so true warriors would never bother raising one.

“Freeze.” A voice of warning suddenly came from in front of him.

Suo Jia started, and immediately stopped. When he glanced over, he saw 5 figures wearing animal skins, standing about 50 meters away. The bows in their hands were all pointed towards Suo Jia. It was clear that as they didn't know Suo Jia's purpose for coming, the sharp arrows would be immediately shot towards him if he dared to advance. At the same time, those 5 Megaconus would also bound over to rip him to pieces.

Suo Jia stood in place with a bitter smile. He knew that no matter how strong he was, his current strength wasn't enough to defeat 5 Megaconus and 5 senior hunters at the same time. In addition, he wanted to ask the other people something, so he couldn't possibly provoke them.

Suo Jia smiled and declared, “Don’t be mistaken. I’m simply a lost wanderer; I have no ill intentions. I just want to ask for directions.”

“Hmph.” One of the hunters opposite him snorted, “Don’t try to deceive us. We’ve seen mages before; they dress similarly to you.”

“Eh.” Only after hearing the other party’s words did Suo Jia realized that he had never seemed to have seen the clothes they were wearing before. Although they only wore animal skins, the shape and cut of the clothes were different from what Suo Jia knew. Most importantly, the fur of the skins were all on the outside.

In Holy Light Empire, all the hunters had the fur on the inside of the leather clothing. Firstly due to the aesthetic reasons, and secondly due to increase warmth. But the hunters in front of Suo Jia now had the fur on the outer surface, which confused him.

Soon, Suo Jia realized that this place was most likely no longer Holy Light Empire. As he inspected the opposite party, he asked sincerely, “May I ask, is this Holy Light Empire’s territory?”

The hunters opposite him started, then...one of the older hunters finally sighed and put down his bow. He said with a smile, “It looks like you really are lost. This isn’t Holy Light’s territory, it’s actually Kaya Empire’s territory.”

“Ka...Kaya.” Suo Jia felt dizziness rush through his head. After

all this time, he'd unknowingly reached Holy Light's neighboring country. No wonder he was lost...with a map of Holy Light Empire, how was he supposed to find his way around Kaya Empire?

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Author's Note:

Starting from this chapter, Suo Jia has officially left Holy Light and embarked on a long journey. As for the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, they will have their explanation later. In my writing, betrayers never have good endings. The Velociraptor Knights follow this, as do the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya. As for Duo Mei's group, I don't have much to say. I don't actually think of their actions as betrayal, but it's true that the Fourth Prince and Suo Jia were both simultaneously betrayed.

The reason I say they didn't betray anyone is because they didn't do anything bad to Suo Jia. Even when the Fourth Prince had ordered them to hunt Suo Jia down, they hadn't acted. They hadn't ever gone against any of Suo Jia's orders, so how could they be said to have betrayed him?

Saying they betrayed him isn't excessive either. Not listening to the Fourth Prince's words was betrayal, but they simultaneously let Suo Jia meet with misfortune, which was also betrayal. Thus....everyone should properly consider their difficult circumstances. If it were you, exactly who would you be loyal to? Would it be a petty oath of devotion in to the Fourth Prince, who held their families in his hand, or to their benefactor with whom that had strong emotions for, Suo Jia? Loyalty couldn't be split

between the two, so what were they to do?

Actually, I already addressed this really really....really early and clearly. However, you guys all just didn't see it back then. There were complaints about how Suo Jia was too intelligent, but really, while he is extremely smart, many of his actions were being manipulated, like a puppet. And the one holding those strings were the Fourth Prince and Wen Ya. If you can, you should please go back and read before pondering the matter closely.

Some readers have already seen that the Fourth Prince isn't actually powerful in terms of politics. After all, he's only the fourth child; there are still three older brothers in front of him. He has few supporters, which is why the fire wind warriors were under the Fourth Prince's control. The reason why he had come to Holy Light and why he hadn't minded Wen Ya's fatness before to relentlessly chase after her was to create a huge support for himself. After all...Holy Light was a super megapolis in the Empire, the strongest power. He needed the support of Duke Wen Sha, to obtain the kingship.

Chapter 253: Encountering A Little Thief On The Road (Part 1)

Following the hunters' lead, Suo Jia finally reached the frontier city of Kaya Empire, City of Forests. He was also able to purchase a map of Kaya Empire from a general store. But what made Suo Jia laugh bitterly was that he wasn't able to use the map in his hands. The map of Kaya Empire was different from that of Holy Light Empire in symbols, marks, and even the colors used.

Kaya Empire was the largest of the six empires, and was at least 10 times larger than Holy Light. The pathlines drawn on the map were so unfathomably packed together. The only thing that could be read from the map was the general directions of the cities, and there were absolutely no paths substantially expressed to choose from.

Holy Light Empire was pretty small, so the map was very detailed. If one wanted to go from point A to point B, they'd be able to find all the main paths between these two points. Because the empire had a small surface area, the map was naturally more meticulous. Thus, searching for places was much easier.

However, Kaya Empire was different. Its surface area was over 10 times greater than Holy Light's. If one wanted to go from point A to point B, they'd have just search around themselves. The map only contained the general locations of both points, but had absolutely no roads mapped out. There was absolutely no way for such things to be represented on the map; otherwise, the entire map would just become a giant mess.

As Suo Jia looked at the map in his hands, he felt the urge to cry. A single centimeter on that map was probably a distance of over thousands of meters. There were probably also mountains, rivers, forests, and swamps in between; it wasn't as simple as just following the map.

In this world, rivers were somewhat easier to cross, but mountains were very difficult to climb, since there were normally very powerful magical beasts there. As for forests, they were pretty much impossible to pass through alone. If one entered without any others, they'd be devoured until even their bones no longer remained.

On the other hand, swamps were death traps. These also had countless magical beasts, which made them even more frightening than magical beast forests. It could be said mountains, forests, and swamps were all obstacles that Suo Jia couldn't surmount. A single mistake would lead to his death in this foreign land.

"Guide..." That's right, Suo Jia knew that he needed a guide, someone to lead him across Kaya Empire to head towards the Greater Trade Routes. However, how could a guide be so easy to find?

While Kaya Empire was indeed very large, the size of ten Holy Light's, Suo Jia had come to understand through books that Kaya was still just a small, nameless empire in this world. As for Holy Light, it was even smaller, to the point where one wouldn't be able to find it on a world map. It was said that...Kaya was the equivalent to the a province in a great nation that contained many other provinces in terms of size.

Suo Jia stared blankly at the map in his hand. He had suddenly realized that although he needed a guide, it couldn't just be for Kaya Empire alone, but a guide that could point him through the Greater Trade Routes. He needed a great guide that was exceptionally familiar with all the countries in the world, a journey companion.

This kind of guide did indeed exist in this world. Actually, treasure hunters made the best guides, as they weren't bound to any one country; they'd appear in any place that had treasures. Influential treasure hunter families in particular possessed detailed world maps that they had personally drawn. That's why...as long as he managed to get an experienced treasure hunter to lead him, Suo Jia's guide problem would be solved.

After bidding farewell to the hunters that had led him here, Suo Jia rushed straight to the thief union. In this world, thief unions existed in all countries. Actually, all the thief unions in the world were linked, just split into different branches.

The reason he wanted to go the thief union was because while treasure hunters were called 'hunters', they were actually the same branch of occupation as thieves. Anything related to thieves wouldn't be in the hunter-related occupation.

The thief union looked like a large, but run-down, two story cabin from the outside. In conformance with the thieves' concealment speciality, the building style didn't stick out at all. At first glance, one would think it was just a common residence.

The outside wasn't the only part that followed that unique concealment trait. The inside of the union was also very particular. A dim chandelier hung in the old cabin, and it wasn't bright at all. It was just as subtle as everything else...

The cabin was filled with round tables and chairs. The surrounding walls had many blackboards hung on them. Right across from the entrance was a long front desk. That's right... actually, the thief union was basically just a bar. Anyone that entered could get a drink, although everyone knew that the bar was just a deceiving image. The true function of this place was a thief union that accepted and managed any matters related to thieves.

After entering the thief union, Suo Jia found a dark corner to sit in. According to the records of books, this kind of corner was where the more powerful thieves normally gathered. The stronger the thief was, the more they'd pay attention to concealment. Otherwise, their enemies would easily find them.

In addition, Suo Jia had chosen this corner because it was an area where all information paths were distributed. If he wanted to hear some secret in the thief realm, secretly listening in, choosing this place was definitely the right choice. Typically speaking, people discussing more secret matters preferred to choose darker and more isolated areas.

Suo Jia ordered a glass of gin, and lightly pursed his lips. On the outside, he looked to be enjoying the fragrance of the fine alcohol, but he had actually dispersed his consciousness everywhere to listen to the discussions in every corner.

Suo Jia listened for a long time, but while he heard quite a few top secret pieces of information, he wasn't able to hear a discussion related to what he desired. After drinking three glasses of alcohol, Suo Jia was finally unable to sit there any longer. He didn't have the time to waste here; if keeping watch here wouldn't work, he'd have to take the initiative to attack.

After ordering another glass of gin, Suo Jia stood up with his glass in his hand. After scanning through his surroundings, he smiled and began to walk over towards a round table near the window.

The four thieves sitting at the table watched in shock as Suo Jia sat down at an empty seat with a smile. One of the thieves asked in bewilderment, "Oi. Mister, I don't think we know each other?"

"Hehe..." Suo Jia chuckled as he looked at the opposite party and calmly replied, "Not all relationships start from being acquainted. People can become friends after the relationship gradually grows."

Suo Jia turned around and gestured at the worker, "Bring 4 more cups of gin here. I'd like to treat my friends."

The four thieves froze at first, but then they all began to laugh. Something like this happened quite frequently in the bar. They all knew that Suo Jia definitely had something he wanted to ask them about. This was also the main function of the thief union. As long as one treated a thief in the bar to a drink, the person would be able to make inquiries. Of course...if the information was more

valuable, a fee would have to be given as well.

Just then, four glasses brimming with gin were served. The fourth thieves didn't bother holding back, and each gulped their drinks down. It was rare for someone to treat them, moreover, with something so expensive. If they didn't drink as much as possible, then it'd be a waste on their parts.

After downing over half of their drinks in a single breath, the four thieves put down their glasses and one of the older ones said with a flushed face, "Alright friend, if there's anything you want to ask about, go ahead."

Suo Jia glanced around before smiling and nodding. Without bothering to gloss over anything, he said, "I would like to ask, who in Kaya Empire would understand the entire world pretty well? I need a guide, one that can lead me to advance throughout the Greater Trade Routes."

The thieves all started, then the older thief shook his head, "Another little guy that doesn't understand how vast the world is. What's the good in wandering through the Greater Trade Routes?"

With a sigh, the thief continued, "But no matter what, I respect your decision. In addition...since I've already accepted your drink, I'll dutily answer you."

The thief abruptly lifted his glass and dumped all of its contents down his throat, then said in a single breath, "You can go look near Emerald City. There's a secret treasure hunter there who can

probably satisfy your request. Her name is Nicole.”

Chapter 254: Encountering A Little Thief On The Road (Part 2)

Since Suo Jia didn't know the way, Suo Jia could only employ the four thieves to lead him, and Suo Jia rushed to Emerald City. There, they reached an extremely prosperous city in the middle of a forest.

After reaching Emerald City's thief union, the four thieves drank with Suo Jia once more before leaving. As for finding Nicole, that was Suo Jia's own problem. The four thieves only knew of such a person; they didn't know where she lived, or her most recent traces. Actually, a thief's tracks were virtually impossible to grasp. Wanting to find her was fine, but that required luck.

Suo Jia searched for many days, and asked around quite a bit too. However, he still wasn't able to gather any detailed information. Everyone knew of Nicole, and also confirmed that she lived in Emerald City. However, none of them knew of her current whereabouts.

However, his efforts during these days weren't wasted. Suo Jia had still learned quite a bit from the words of thieves. Nicole was a descendent from a thousand year old influential treasure hunter family that had lasted many generations. The reason everyone knew of her was not because of how powerful she was, but because ten Legendary ranked treasure hunters had been among Nicole's ancestors, as well as one Epic ranked person.

On average, Nicole's family would produce a Legendary ranked treasure hunter every century, and an Epic ranked person every

thousand years. Although their family had already declined...the knowledge that Nicole's family had accumulated over the thousands of years still existed.

What did ten Legendary ranked treasure hunters and one Epic ranked hunter appearing every thousands of years signify? That's right...it meant that Nicole's family had 10 ancestors that had successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes. One of them was even a leading figure in the Greater Trade Routes. That's why, they definitely had a world map that was unimaginably complete.

Suo Jia learned from word of mouth that Nicole was the last generation from the family, as well as the last person. Her parents had both died already. While Nicole's current whereabouts were unknown, people in Emerald City had seen her not too long ago. That meant he'd be able to find her if he was lucky enough.

Finally, after a few more days of scouting, Suo Jia realized that by just idly hoping for a chance, it would be very hard to find Nicole. Although Emerald City was large, going outside to test his luck might offer a better chance.

Suo Jia left the thief bar, and followed the road to leave the city district. He looked at the sketch he had obtained of Nicole, and muttered this stimulating name to himself. He had this nagging feeling that he'd seen her somewhere before; even the name seemed somewhat familiar.

"Goddamn, hurry up and catch him. He stole my wallet..." A furious roar came from in front of Suo Jia.

He raised his head in shock to look across from him, only to see an energetic black-clothed figure turn around the corner as fast as lightning, currently running over towards Suo Jia. In the blink of an eye, the masked, black-clothed person had already dashed to where Suo Jia stood.

Suo Jia could tell that this gale-like figure was the said thief that had stolen the wallet. However...this was none of his business, and he had no desire to rashly show his ability. As long as it wasn't his wallet being stolen, he wouldn't bother paying the thief any attention.

The black-clothed person suddenly increased in speed as he rushed towards Suo Jia. Seeing this, Suo Jia subconsciously used the Rising Wave Steps. His body shifted strangely in attempt to evade and let the opposite party through.

However, Suo Jia had made a huge mistake. The Rising Wave Steps utilized feints to trick the enemy's mind and conscious. While it clearly looked like one was going to the left, their body was actually shifting right. While it looked like one was advancing, their body was actually backing up. This made it impossible for the person to get hit by attacks.

However, this footwork was only effective in battle. It was meant to be used when the enemy was diligently trying to attack a person. But now, both Suo Jia and thief wanted to evade each other. Thus, Suo Jia had made a fatal error.

Seeing Suo Jia's body move right, the black clad thief shot Suo Jia a grateful glance, and was prepared to break through Suo Jia's left. However, Suo Jia's Rising Wave Steps were reverse, so his body was actually shifting to the right.

"Bang." With a muffled sound of collision, the black clad thief violently crashed into Suo Jia. The two of them were momentarily sent tumbling backwards. The large momentum caused them both to fall down at the same time, miserably rolling along the ground.

"Quick...capture him. He's already fallen, so hurry up and get him." As soon as the two fell, an indignant roar rang out from around the corner. The next instant...a few dozen figures quickly came around, charging over at Suo Jia and the masked black-clothed thief.

The black clad thief glared at Suo Jia in anger, but didn't have any time to pay him any mind. The thief crawled up with difficulty, preparing to run away. However, just as he stood up, he suddenly staggered, and fell back down. It was clear that he had sustained serious injuries from the collision just now.

That tiny delay was enough for the enemy to reach him already. Dozens of figures surrounded Suo Jia and the masked thief. Then... a stout fatty walked over with a fierce expression. His fat hands pointed at the masked thief as he shouted in anger, "Hit him. Hit him until he dies. Daring to steal even my money, he's too brazen."

The surrounding warriors all pulled out their weapons and headed towards the thief. Seeing this, Suo Jia couldn't help but frown. In his opinion, the thief's stealing had been right and

proper; if he was in the thief occupation, stealing was natural. Since he had been caught, all the fatty had to do was demand his wallet back. Why was it necessary to beat the thief to death?

As Suo Jia was thinking this, the fight had already started. As the warriors moved in to attack, the masked thief displayed extremely nimble movements, and his body quickly flashed through a narrow space to escape. In just a moment, he'd successfully dodged dozens of attacks.

However, the enemy just had too many people. The space they encircled was too small. While he could flee through that space, it was still pitiful. Even after he strived to continue evading several attacks, the black clad thief was finally unable to dodge any further. After being hit by several strong attacks, his body bled furiously as he fell to the ground, and his body violently shuddered. However, the thief's exposed pair of eyes still flashed with a light of contempt.

"Damn..." The fatty cursed and said mercilessly, "Wrap him up. Since he dared to steal my money, I'll definitely chop off his hands."

A few warriors walked over, prepared to seize the masked thief and break his hands. Just then, a frigid voice rang out, "That's enough. You shouldn't go too overboard, this much should be fine already."

All the people froze, and turned around in confusion towards the source of the voice. Everyone watched as Suo Jia slowly crawled up from the ground. The fall just now had covered Suo Jia's blue

mage robe with dust; even a section of his face had gotten dirty.

After seeing his sorry state, the people clearly didn't pay him any mind. What kind of powerful figure would fall to such a state after a collision with a thief? Although he was a mage, any mage would be unable to defeat a warrior at such close range, no matter how formidable they were.

The fatty inquired, "Oh. You're the guy that helped me stop this guy just now. But...despite that, you don't have the power to prevent me from punishing this little thief."

The fatty abruptly turned around and coldly declared, "What are you all still waiting for? I already said to wrap this thief up and chop off his hands. That way, he won't be able to steal anymore."

The warriors once again raised their weapons, swinging them down towards the black clad thief lying on the ground. Against these warriors, the black-clothed thief could only close his eyes in despair. At such a close range, a thief couldn't possibly go against a warrior head-on.

"Hiss..." It was clear to see that the black clad thief was just about to be detained. But just then, a soft whizz sounded out, and a freezing air quickly brushed past all the warriors' bodies. Feeling the powerful undulation of magic power, the warriors all turned around in alarm, aiming their weapons towards the source of the chilly air.

Although it was close range, the warriors all knew that the

repercussions after a mage had wantonly activated magic would be quite heavy. A mage's destructive power far surpassed a warrior's. Allowing a mage to act was equivalent to courting death.

Chapter 255: Abuse Of Magic Potions (Part 1)

The warriors watched as Suo Jia began to walk over to the battle with a stormy expression, as if he didn't even see the warriors' fierce gazes.

Finally, when Suo Jia had reached 5 meters outside the battle area, he coldly swept a glance around and said, "Don't force me to make a move. I've already said before that this is enough. You can't go too overboard."

"F*cking...you're just a puny mage, what are you trying to pull? You guys, seize him. Everyone else, tie up that thief and chop off his hands. Let's see who dares to obstruct my decision." The fatty faced Suo Jia and pointed around as he spoke.

Six warriors rushed at Suo Jia, while the other four continued to near the black clad thief. Just as the fatty had said, a mere mage didn't have the power to act so arrogant towards them at such close range.

"Hmph." The moment just before the warriors had taken their second step, a violent shriek ravaged the air, blocking the six warriors in front of Suo Jia. The warriors had just managed to defend their bodies with their weapons before getting hit with a bang, their bodies sent flying through the air. They collided into the four warriors and the fatty behind them, tumbling all the way until they crashed into a building on the side of the street. The dozen figures had all tangled into a pile of painful moans.

That's right, this was the effect of the Atlantis armor: instantly activating Diamond Charge. The powerful warriors, who had been caught completely off guard, were unable to block the explosive attack. Thus, all of them were sent flying from its force; even the fatty hadn't been able to escape.

In a mere moment, the area had become spacious and empty. Only Suo Jia stood there alone; everyone else had fallen to the ground. Suo Jia lowered his head and looked over at the black clad thief on the ground. Suo Jia watched as a large amount of blood poured out of the black clad thief's wounds. Suo Jia knew that if the thief wasn't treated soon, he'd definitely die.

Intense footsteps could be heard around them. It was clear that... the fatty's shout just now, as well as the battle, had attracted many people's attentions. Suo Jia bent down, scooped up the black clad thief, and quickly threaded his way through the alleyways.

As Suo Jia ran away, he lowered his head in curiosity at the black clad thief in his arms, inwardly wondering why this guy was so light. Most importantly, concealed under the metallic scent of blood, Suo Jia could clearly smell a familiar, simple and elegant fragrance. Could it be...that this thief was a female?

Just then, the black-clothed thief in his arms weakly said, "Let go of me, you filthy bastard. I don't need your saving, don't touch me."

"Mm." Hearing this, Suo Jia grew even more puzzled. He seemed

to have heard this sound before. Moreover...the fragrance he had smelled just now also seemed somewhat familiar. Who was this?

Suo Jia supported the black clad person's body with one hand, while he quickly went to remove the thief's mask with the other hand. The next instant...a delicate and pretty small face appeared in front of Suo Jia. Currently...the owner of this face was glaring at Suo Jia in embarrassment and anger.

When Suo Jia saw that familiar face, he immediately recalled her. Wasn't this fellow the one that had tried to assassinate Suo Jia in the Dawn City war, but had instead been caught? If Suo Jia remembered correctly, she should've still been in Dawn's prison.

Suo Jia's suddenly started. Many things he hadn't understood before immediately became clear. This woman wasn't anyone else but the target of Suo Jia's current search: Nicole.

Suo Jia couldn't help but grimly smile. No wonder he had thought Nicole's name and sketch seemed familiar. A few months ago, he had just seen her in Dawn; how could he not be familiar with her? Even if his memory was horrible, he couldn't possibly have forgotten her so soon. After all...that girl had almost successfully assassinated Suo Jia. Back then, if her chosen attack point had been Suo Jia's neck, Suo Jia's corpse would currently be rotting somewhere.

Suo Jia couldn't help but recall their first encounter when he looked at Nicole's embarrassed and furious expression. In order to confirm her gender, Suo Jia seemed to have touched her chest, and even threatened to hand her over to the slaves for their enjoyment.

This was exactly why Nicole had called him a filthy bastard.

Suo Jia lightly pinched Nicole's nose and smiled, "Hey, you're my captive. Since you dared to secretly escape, I obviously have to catch you back."

"You," Nicole cried out in shock, "You can't be for real. Would a grand city lord really chase me across thousands of kilometers to capture me, a minor escaped criminal?"

"Hehe..." Suo Jia chuckled and replied, "That's right, you're my captive. Unless I release you, you don't have the right to run away. Even if you flew up into the heavens, I would still go and retrieve you."

Nicole couldn't help but bitterly smile. She shook her head and weakly said, "Sigh...if I had known it would be like this earlier, I wouldn't have accepted that business proposal. Forget it...I give up. You can punish me however you'd like."

As Suo Jia looked at Nicole grow weaker and weaker in his arms, he furrowed his brows together. Only then did he remember that this girl still had heavy wounds. Suo Jia once again lifted Nicole up, and quickly began to rush towards an abandoned building.

"Siiikk..." A crisp sound of ripping silk rang out as Suo Jia tore open the clothes around Nicole's wounds, revealing the harsh injury hidden underneath the cloth. Although Suo Jia had Life Potions, they were most effective only when they were directly applied onto the injuries.

Although Suo Jia knew what he was doing, the problem was that Nicole didn't. When she saw Suo Jia destroy her clothes so roughly, Nicole couldn't help but clutch her clothes to her chest in horror as she trembled, "Hey. Let me warn you, if you dare to... dare to do that to me, I won't ever forgive you even if I die."

Suo Jia grimaced and said in disdain, "Where does a brat like you get such complicated thoughts from? With a body like yours that hasn't even finished developing, I wouldn't be able to enjoy it even if you asked me to."

Suo Jia then pulled out Life Potions from his pocket, and poured their contents out bit by bit onto Nicole's wounds. Instantly...a refreshing feeling spread out from the injuries. Only then did Nicole finally realize why Suo Jia had ripped apart her clothes.

Although she now knew Suo Jia had good intentions, Nicole still clearly minded Suo Jia's words. She pouted and said indignantly, "I'm only 18 years old, so having a body like this is already pretty good. Moreover, I didn't have that kind of explosive body type in the first place."

While Nicole spoke, Suo Jia had finally finished pouring the potions on her injuries. When he saw the snow-white, resin-like skin underneath her clothes, he couldn't help but reach his hand out and stroke the buds in front of Nicole's chest. At the same time, he praised, "Yea...not bad, not bad, they're quite smooth."

Nicole was still, unable to react for the longest time. She could

stare blankly at Suo Jia. Only after Suo Jia had finished caressing her and had retracted his hand did Nicole finally realize what had just happened. In that moment, Nicole couldn't help but open her throat and cry out sharply.

After hearing the ear-piercing shriek, Suo Jia abruptly thrust out his hand to cover Nicole's mouth. He fiercely growled, "What in the world are you shouting for? It's just a touch, not like you lost anything from it."

"Eh." Nicole suddenly stopped shouting in shock. Although she inwardly knew that a girl couldn't be touched by a boy, Nicole didn't actually know why. Only after hearing Suo Jia's words did Nicole realize that she couldn't really argue.

Seeing that Nicole was still embarrassed, Suo Jia shook his head and said, "Forget it, if you don't like it, then I simply won't touch you. You should rest properly. After you finish resting, we'll head out."

"Head out? Where..." Nicole instantly forgot what had happened just now, and asked in confusion.

Suo Jia slowly sat down next to Nicole and looked off into the distant sky with glowing eyes. "The Greater Trade Routes."

Chapter 256: Abuse Of Magic Potions (Part 2)

“The Greater Trade Routes?” Nicole couldn’t help but cry out in shock. Her eyes lit up exceptionally brightly for a moment, but quickly dimmed down. She said in defeat, “No...please forgive me, but I cannot accompany you to the Greater Trade Routes. I have a reason that I must stay here for.”

Suo Jia looked at Nicole in confusion. Although Nicole was his captive, Suo Jia had only said that as a joke. In reality, if Nicole didn’t willingly help him, she would probably prove to be useless even if she stayed by his side.

Suo Jia furrowed his brows and replied, “Nicole...I don’t understand. Judging by your expression just now, I can tell that you really want to go to the Greater Trade Routes. But then, why aren’t you willing to go?”

Nicole chewed her lip with a troubled expression. After hesitating for a long time, Nicole shook her head and said, “Please forgive me, I really cannot go with you. At the very least, I can’t right now. I also cannot tell you the reason.” Nicole lowered her head with an apologetic expression.

Suo Jia internally struggled as he looked at Nicole. He didn’t want to force her, he was only curious as to why Nicole couldn’t accompany him to the Greater Trade Routes. However...judging by her expression, she wouldn’t answer regardless of how much he asked her.

After thinking it over for a bit, Suo Jia nodded and replied. “Alright. In that case, I won’t force you to do it. However... although you can’t accompany me onto the Greater Trade Routes, you should still be able to cross Kaya Empire to the next great power, right?”

Nicole paused for a bit, before quickly regaining her senses and nodding furiously. “Of course, of course...if you just want me to escort you outside of Kaya Empire, I can still help you. When do we head out?”

Suo Jia shrugged his shoulders with a smile, “Of course, the sooner the better. If you don’t have any problems, it’s best if we head out immediately.”

Nicole knit her brows together in thought, then firmly replied, “Alright, then let’s head out immediately. However, we must complete negotiations now; I will only accompany you to the border. Once I escort you there, you will let me leave.”

Suo Jia smiled and stretched out his right hand, saying sincerely, “It’s a deal.”

“Pa.” The clear sound of Nicole high-fiving Suo Jia rang through the air as she replied with a smile, “In that case, there’s no time to lose. Let’s head out.”

With Nicole in the lead, the two rushed to a place to purchase a large vehicle typically used by adventurers. They also bought some

every-day products, and took advantage of the night to leave Kaya Empire.

The following few days were very calm. Suo Jia didn't actively speak to Nicole along the way, and just trained the Ice and Snow Pact in the vehicle. When they rested, he'd find a secluded place to release Mysterious Ice Arrows one after another. This was for the sake of training the three great auxiliary magics in addition to the Mysterious Great Arrow.

However, nothing in this world was ever calm for long. On the seventh day, they finally encountered a mature, liger beast. As a result of the battle, the horses pulling the vehicle had died, and Nicole's right arm had been lightly injured again.

Suo Jia looked at Nicole's blood-covered arm, and didn't dare to tarry any longer. He hurriedly pulled out a Life Potion and healed her injury. Seeing her weakened state, Suo Jia didn't bother hiding anything, and took out the four colored potions. With his help, Nicole quickly recovered to her original state.

Nicole stared at Suo Jia in shock, then looked at the colorful glass bottles in Suo Jia's hand. "You...where did you get these potions from? They couldn't be..."

"Hehe..." Suo Jia smiled smugly and nodded, "That's right, these are Magic Potions, Spirit Potions, and Endurance Potions. They're all products of Enchanted Zhiyao, and have quite amazing effects."

Nicole furrowed her brows. After long contemplation, Nicole

finally said, “City Lord Suo Jia, these potions are indeed useful. But do you know why these potions’ recipes were lost?”

Suo Jia shook his head in confusion and said, “How would I know that? I think...it must’ve been related to the chaos of war that the recipes were lost.”

“No.” Gravely shaking her head, Nicole stated firmly. “In reality, it’s not really as you think. Think about it, while the chaos of war can indeed cause many things to be lost, how could something like potions disappear? How come these potions we’re using right now haven’t gotten lost?”

“That...” Suo Jia hesitated. That’s right...with the benefits of these magic potions, they shouldn’t have been lost. Such practical things would only grow bigger and bigger, and become increasingly more prosperous.

Nicole continued, “I advise you to throw out those potions, unless you no longer want to improve. Otherwise, those potions are poisons.”

“Ah?!” Suo Jia cried out in shock, and asked Nicole incredulously, “What are you saying? How could these potions become poisons?”

Nicole looked at Suo Jia seriously and said in a heavy voice, “I just happened to learn a bit about the matters involving the Enchanted Zhiyao from the materials that have been passed down through my family for generations. Although these potions are

useful, you have to understand that anything has a good and bad side. If it was lost, it must be because of an important downside. In reality, it was lost because it had been forcefully repressed.”

Nicole paused for a bit before continuing. “Although these magic potions can quickly replenish your magic power, spirit power, and physical strength, have you ever considered this: This spirit power, magic power, and physical strength aren’t things your body didn’t originally have, but things channeled in from the outside. This contains a great harm. Have you ever thought about that?”

Suo Jia didn’t understand, and he anxiously urged, “Nicole, I really don’t understand. If there’s anything you know, please say it, and don’t hide it. This is very important to me.”

“Mm...” Nicole nodded and said seriously, “Let’s take the Magic Potion as an example. As a mage, the magic power you drive out is from your meditation. It’s comprised from the magical elements that you are closer to. However, the magic power that these Magic Potions collect from the outside aren’t powers that you are familiar with. This will drive your magic power berserk, and you can’t possibly advance above that realm.”

“Physical power is the same. Your physical power isn’t actually that strong. But after pouring in energy from the outside, your body’s control and commanding ability over the power will grow weaker and weaker. If you were a soldier, your battle skills would never improve, and may even recede.”

“Heavens!” Suo Jia shouted in shock. He trembled as he said, “I was wondering why despite being a Great Mage for 2 years, I was

never able to break through to become a Magic Scholar. Before, I had just assumed it was because this realm was just harder to advance through. Now, it seems like it's related to the fact that I'd drunk too many potions created through Enchanted Zhiyao."

Nicole nodded with certainty and firmly pressed, "It's definitely because of this. From beginning to end, you've been using magic power that you haven't linked to at all. With your natural comprehension of the magical elements being so poor, how could you possibly advance to the next realm? Although the might of a magic depends on the level of magic power, you can't ignore your affinity to the elements, as well as how closely connected you are to them. All three of these factors are equally important."

Nicole scanned Suo Jia and guessed, "By my guess, despite being a Great Mage, your magic power and spirit power have already surpassed that of a Magic Scholar's, and reached the level of a Great Magic Scholar's. If you hadn't consumed these potions this whole time, you probably would've already become a Great Magic Scholar by now."

"No," Suo Jia shook his head. "That's not possible. My magic power, spirit power, and physical strength have raised this quickly only because of the Enchanted Zhiyao. Producing a large amount of potions has caused my magic power to soar. However...it's also precisely because of the Enchanted Zhiyao that I haven't been able to advance to the next realm of magic for the past 2 years."

Suo Jia raised his head to look up at the night sky, "No wonder the mage apothecaries from the past were never able to become very powerful mages despite having vast magic power and mighty

spirit power. It turns out that...using these potions actually prevents one from improving in the realms, as one completely loses their affinity with the elements, as well as one's connection to them."

Chapter 257: Terrifying Magic Power (Part 1)

The essential factors that affected the might of magic were magic power, spirit power, element affinity, element comprehension, and magic familiarity. After consuming the potions, one's magic power, spirit power, and magic familiarity wildly increased at an astounding speed, but element comprehensions and affinity were completely lost.

Right now, Suo Jia was like a starving person despite protecting a large grain depot. With the help of the Enchantment Zhiyao, Suo Jia's magic power, spirit power, and physical strength had become frighteningly strong. His training speed had also made rapid progress. However, despite his mighty magic and spirit powers, he couldn't use them.

The magic elements were actually like the army that mages commanded. One had to create an affinity with them to understand them, comprehend them, and to properly use them. Currently, Suo Jia was only able to use 20-30% of his magic and spirit powers.

People that are extremely strong aren't necessarily amazing at fighting, and people that are less powerful aren't necessary weaklings. It really depends on one's comprehension of their strength and how to utilize it. An extremely lightweight boxing champion can easily knock out an extremely heavyweight, normal person. The amount of power they possess isn't important; what's important is the amount of power that one can display.

Some people can easily lift up a 150kg burlap, but can only put about that much weight behind their punches. On the other hand, there are some people that can only lift up a 50kg burlap, but can still carry a 150kg weight behind their punches.

Once a mage reached the Advanced realm, they had to pay particular attention to their affinity and comprehension of the elements. The more proficient they were at such things, the more powerful their magic would become.

Suo Jia wiped away the sweat that had formed on his forehead in his fear, and secretly sighed in relief. If it weren't for Nicole's reminder, he might've made one extra turn too many. As for now, it was a blessing in disguise, and it wouldn't necessarily stir up any issues.

Although one's affinity and understanding of the elements was extremely important, this still had to be built on one's foundation on magic and spirit power. For example, a 3 year old could never defeat an adult, no matter how much they tried.

During the past 2 years, although Suo Jia hadn't advanced through any realms, the Enchantment Zhiyao had improved his speed in improving in magic power, spirit power, and physical strength, to a terrifying degree. Although this had resulted in a loss of his comprehension and cultivation of the elements...he felt that what he gained far surpassed what he lost.

Suo Jia now possessed an enormous amount of magic power and spirit power. Even his physical strength could compare to that of a warrior. Afterwards...Suo Jia could only try to understand and

foster the elements as much as possible, so that he could gradually display more and more of his might.

After thinking it over for a while, Suo Jia decided that even if God had given him another life, he'd still have focused on Enchantment Zhiyao two years ago to boost his magic power, spirit power, and physical strength. But the today two years later was the point where he'd definitely be unable to use Zhiyao anymore. Otherwise, it would just prove to be a waste. No matter how much magic power he had, the amount he could actually display was limited.

Suo Jia gratefully glanced at Nicole, inwardly glad that she'd told him about this so that he didn't go down the wrong path. If he'd made this revelation a year later, he'd really suffer serious losses. But currently, he wasn't losing anything, and was instead gaining many unique benefits. Actually...this was the most logical, fastest, and most effective training method.

The Enchantment Zhiyao's ability to increase his attributes was faster than anything else. Only the Exhaustion Training Method was comparable. To a mage, the most important thing was always magic power, with spirit power second. But things like affinity and comprehension only affected the might of the magic.

Without affinity and understanding of the magical elements, the magic's formidability would be lower, but without magic power and spirit power, there was no way to even activate high ranked magics. A magic could completely drain a person. After weighing both options, even an idiot would be able to choose to focus on the correct one.

Suo Jia looked at the colorful glass bottle in his hand, and grit his teeth, throwing all the bottles back into his interspatial ring. These potions couldn't be used from now on; at the very least, they couldn't be used as often. Otherwise, while he could theoretically still activate magics, there was a possibility that the activation could fail due to his affinity and comprehension levels being too low.

“Mm...” Suo Jia resolutely nodded. Unless he was at a critical moment of life or death, these potions would continue sleeping within the interspatial ring. Suo Jia knew that if he wanted to pass through the Greater Trade Routes, he had to improve himself in every way. This included his affinity and understanding of the magical elements.

Early morning...the light of dawn jumped out from the sky. Suo Jia was within a forest, swiftly waving his right hand to send Mysterious Ice Arrows whizzing out from his palms one after another. After a flash of blue light, a sharp, penetrating ice arrow would shoot out and pierce through a large, thick tree, and then disappear deep into the forest.

To Suo Jia, this was completely normal. He did this kind of training every day for an hour, shooting out a total of 3600 Mysterious Ice Arrows per day, no matter what. This not only improved his familiarity with the ice arrows and improved its destructive power, but it would also simultaneously train the four great auxiliary magics...Precision Strike, Spirit Lock, Acceleration Drive, and Berserk Impact.

With the help of the four great auxiliary magics, Suo Jia's ice arrows were completely different from any other ice mage's. Their speed was double, and their impact force and penetration ability were also more than double. In addition, his Precision Strike and Spirit Lock were so accurate that they could strike someone in the nose without straying the slightest bit to the eyes.

Nicole stood there, stunned as she watched Suo Jia's right hand sway back and forth, with flashes of blue light dying out one after another. Her mouth was wide open, as she was frozen there with an incredulous expression.

Since the day he'd first learned the Mysterious Ice Arrow up until now, Suo Jia had already shot out millions of Mysterious Ice Arrows, to the point where it flowed from him like a river. Even without the four great auxiliary magics, his speed, destructive power, penetration ability, and accuracy had already reached frightening levels. No other mage could possibly shoot out so many ice arrows. After all...who else had done what Suo Jia had, drinking the Magic Potions, Spirit Potions, and Endurance Potions like water.

Under Nicole's dumbfounded watch, Suo Jia shot out over 1000 ice arrows in succession, before stopping with a frown, and he shook his head in dissatisfaction. Although he still had magic power and spirit power remaining, Suo Jia knew that this was pretty much his limit. If he activated any more, he'd end up collapsing in exhaustion.

Suo Jia wiped away the sweat on his forehead and turned around, preparing to get some breakfast. But when he looked back,

Suo Jia discovered that Nicole was currently...standing there with a hilarious posture as she stared at Suo Jia in shock.

In confusion, Suo Jia touched his face to check if there was anything wrong. After discovering that nothing was amiss, he asked, “Uh...Nicole, why are you looking at me like that? Is there anything wrong with me?”

“Eh.” Nicole was finally shocked awake by Suo Jia’s voice. Her eyes swept over him in astonishment as she said with difficulty, “God, are you sure you’re only a Great Mage?”

Although he didn’t understand the reason for her question, Suo Jia nodded with certainty, “That’s right, I can assure you that I’m currently only a Great Mage. That’s because the highest ranked magic I can activate is the Ice Roar.”

“Gulp...” Nicole swallowed hard and said incredulously, “That’s really hard to believe. I don’t understand, where in the world did you get such amazing magic power and spirit power? Do you know how many ice arrows a typical Great Mage can activate?”

“That...” Suo Jia rubbed his head and smiled in embarrassment, “Hehe...I’ve never bothered to look into that question. Why...did I cast too many?”

Nicole wordlessly looked at Suo Jia, then helplessly shook her head, “You, ah...sometimes it seems like you know everything, but sometimes it seems like you don’t know anything. Here, let me explain it to you...”

Chapter 258: Terrifying Magic Power (Part 2)

Nicole looked deeply at Suo Jia and earnestly explained, “Although you cannot release all of your magic power at once... your magic power and spirit power are indeed at extremely profound levels, to the point where you can activate 1000 ice arrows.”

Nicole took a deep breath and explained, “Did you know, a standard Great Mage can only cast 100 Ice Arrow Techniques in one go? But you. You activated 1000. That’s...”

Suo Jia stared at Nicole in shock as he said in disbelief, “No way. It can’t be that extreme. Although my magic power is on the more solid side, it’s not that high.”

Nicole nodded with certainty and replied, “Don’t think it’s exaggerated. If, for example...a normal Great Mage’s magic power was a thermos, your magic power would be a large water jar. The difference is really too great. I even suspect that your magic power has already reached the level of a Magister’s.”

“That...” Suo Jia began to ponder. When he thought more closely, he realized that putting aside the Enchantment Zhiyao, the training speed he’d gained from the Atlantis equipment set alone was already ridiculous. He could maintain the meditative state 24/7, and....with the other parts that also boosted his training speed, this all seemed to be normal.

Suo Jia finally came to the conclusion that with the occupation that improved magic power and spirit power the fastest, as well as the most powerful Epic ranked set, he was extremely terrifying. This result made Suo Jia's magic power reach a level that was 10 times higher than a same ranked mage's.

Suo Jia couldn't help but happily cheer to himself. All he needed to do now was the deepen his comprehension of the elements and improve his affinity with them. As long as he caught up in that realm, the conditions would be perfect for him to rise to success and activate even higher and mightier magics.

In terms of how to train, Suo Jia actually didn't need any special kind of method. He just needed to spend every moment sensing the elements and fostering his relationship with them. Since he was able to draw knowledge from his meditation for 6 hours per day, as well as train his Ice Arrow Technique and the Ice and Snow Pact so often, his results were especially outstanding.

Of course, he could no longer use the potions. Otherwise, ushering out the old and only replenishing the new meant that he'd never be able to understand or get closer to the elements. Wouldn't that be like a prostitute? A prostitute would always have many clients, but if she never bothered to get to know the opposite party, how could she ever get closer to them?

Suo Jia knew that what he needed to do now was to protect his body as if it were precious jade. Unless it was a desperate situation, the potions were basically poisons, just as Nicole had said.

During the next few days, Suo Jia practically never left the

carriage except to train in the Ice Arrow Technique. While doing closed door training for the Ice and Snow Pact and improving his ice magic's formidability, he could deepen his relationship with the elements and foster his affinity.

A profound mage's affinity with the elements was at a frightening level. Even flames hot enough to melt metal would just be dancing in their palms without harming their skin at all. But when they used these flames to attack others, the raging devastation would be enough to instantly turn the enemy into ash.

Rushing along their journey, the two people finally reached one of Kaya Empire's famous metropolises a month later....Endless Clouds City. The reason the city had such a name was because when one looked down from the sky, the city had the appearance of a long series of connected clouds.

Endless Clouds City was a port city. The entire place had been created along the coastline that stretched for hundreds of kilometers. It was much larger than any city in Holy Light Empire; even Holy Light City was only half the size of Endless Clouds City.

Although the two people weren't tired because they had been sitting in the carriage, they were inevitably mentally exhausted after the trip. After entering the city, Nicole led Suo Jia into a large inn in a very familiar manner. The two then collapsed into a deep sleep. After all...no matter how comfortable the carriage was, it still couldn't compare to a bed.

After sleeping for some period of time, Suo Jia finally awoke. When he saw the warm glow outside the window, he couldn't help

but sigh comfortably. He couldn't even remember the last time he'd slept so well. It seemed like...it probably traced all the way back to when he was still very young.

“Grumble...” Amidst his contentment, Suo Jia heard a strange sound. At the same time, an exceptionally fierce hunger arose in his stomach.

Although he had the interspatial ring's storage, and hadn't exactly gone hungry during the journey, he could only eat long-lasting, nonperishable foods, which weren't exactly delicious. One could say that even if they did have amazing flavor, eating them for a month straight would eventually make it impossible to swallow them down.

Recently, Suo Jia hadn't eaten very much; he'd pretty much treated food like medicine. He'd close his eyes then wash it down with water. To a normal civilian, exceptionally delectable venison wasn't enough for his appetite.

Suo Jia sat up and changed his clothes before leaving the room. After thinking about it, he walked up to Nicole's room door, and was prepared to ask her to eat with him. He lightly knocked on the door, but even after waiting for a while, Nicole still answered it.

Amidst his bewilderment, one of the inn's workers walked over and respectfully said, “Mister, this room's occupant already went out this morning. She said that she had something to do, and that she'd return by night.”

Suo Jia nodded in understanding, and turned around to go down the stairs. He ordered a table full of dishes, and heartily ate. After he finished, Suo Jia strolled around Endless Clouds City alone, and only returned to the inn once it was already evening. Then, he slept deeply once more.

Originally, Suo Jia had thought that Nicole would've already returned by that night. But when he woke up the next morning, he discovered that Nicole hadn't ever returned.

Commanding the worker to open the room door, Suo Jia walked in, and discovered that the bedding was abnormally tidy. It was clear that after they had been tidied up yesterday morning, nobody had slept in it. In other words, Nicole really hadn't returned.

When Suo Jia looked at the neat bedding, a vague feeling of foreboding arose. Although they hadn't known each other for long, Suo Jia knew that Nicole was a trustworthy person. She had had many chances to leave during the journey. If she hadn't gotten into trouble, there was no reason to wait until coming here to leave.

Suo Jia couldn't help but frown. He wanted to go out and search for her, but without any clues, there was no way of finding her. After all, it was like finding a needle in a haystack in such a large city that had a population of millions if he just went out to search for her like this.

After contemplating the issue for a long time, Suo Jia finally came up with a solution. If...Nicole had really gotten into some mishap, then her name would definitely be passed around in the

thief bar. Thinking this, Suo Jia hurriedly left the inn, and rushed over to the thief union.

An hour later. Suo Jia sat in the corner of the bar with a downcast expression, using his finger to play around with an unusual glass. Just as he had expected, Nicole really had gotten into trouble. As soon as he had arrived at the bar, Suo Jia had already heard a lot of information from the thieves' chatter.

Yesterday morning, Endless Clouds City's lord had been robbed, and lost a large amount of his wealth. Fortunately, he'd discovered this quite soon; nearly right after they'd been stolen. After receiving this news, the city lord had immediately deployed sentinels to block all exits, and searched every corner to seize the thief.

But even after searching for a really long time, he still hadn't been able to find that vile robber. Just as everyone had thought the robber had already left, everyone saw Nicole's figure appear in a corner. This was inevitable; one couldn't move around stealthily forever. No matter how powerful a thief was, they still had limits of various lengths of time.

In reality, maintaining stealth for a minute was already quite amazing for a thief. Typically speaking, one could only conceal themselves for a dozen seconds, or maybe a bit more. But Nicole had clearly hid herself for at least 10 minutes. This was just too shocking. What was even more astonishing was that Nicole had successfully hid herself from all the searching experts' eyes and ears. This could only be described as terrifying, and only Nicole's ancient family's stealth technique was able to exhibit such insane

results.

However, thieves were all the same; once their stealth failed and their concealment was lifted, they couldn't possibly be a warrior's opponent. Moreover, with so many hidden talents in the city lord's residence, there was pretty much no way Nicole could resist. Thus, she was subdued.

The city lord's residence had been robbed in broad daylight; this made the city lord completely furious. He'd already declared that that afternoon, he'd publicly behead Nicole in Endless Clouds City's square.

Chapter 259: Breaking Out Of Encirclement

(Part 1)

Hearing this, Suo Jia began to grow anxious. Although...Nicole couldn't bring him to the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia had already thought of her as his friend after traveling with her for the past month. No matter what, he couldn't just sit there and watch Nicole be executed.

If this was before, Suo Jia could've just charged fearlessly into the city lord's residence with the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes and rescued Nicole. But this was clearly impossible now; the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes would no longer follow his commands.

Of course, Suo Jia had also considering crashing the residence alone to rescue her, but the results wouldn't be pretty. If he just charged in like this, he'd basically be asking to die. What kind of place was the city lord's residence? How could one possibly enter and exit it as they pleased?

Despite contemplating for a while, Suo Jia still hadn't come up with a completely functional plan. Eventually, he came up with an idea that wasn't exactly a solution: seizing the execution by force.

Why was he able to disrupt the execution, but not the city lord's residence? The city lord's residence was strictly and heavily guarded, with a vast amount of experts. Moreover, there weren't really any objects to hide behind for cover, so while it was easy to enter, it was hard to exit. However, the execution grounds was different. When the time came, there would definitely be a huge

audience. As long as he was able to mingle into the crowd, he'd be able to escape into a nearby building, and the opposite party wouldn't have any way of chasing after him.

Suo Jia downed the glass in his hand, abruptly stood up, and strode out of the bar. There was still some time left before noon; he needed to make some preparations.

Time slowly passed, morning gradually turned to noon. The number of people in Endless Clouds City's square had increased. Everyone that had heard about the news had rushed over from various places. As Nicole was the last generation of an influential family, her reputation far surpassed her actual abilities. Everyone wanted to personally catch a glimpse of that girl.

Finally...a group of soldiers made their way through. Nicole's hands were bound behind her back, and she walked through the opened path, her body forcibly dragged to the middle of the stone platform.

Was she scared? No...Nicole had experienced way more experiences like this before. Although she wasn't that old, she'd had a taste of too many intense thrills. At this point, she'd already become apathetic to such things.

However, although she wasn't afraid of death, Nicole's eyes were still vacant, with a trace of despair. Unlike before, Nicole definitely had no hope of surviving. But she couldn't die; she still had so many important things to do. How could her life end here?

Two soldiers forced her up to the platform step by step. When she looked around, she saw that the large square had already been filled with nearly 100,000 people; the square was so packed that even water couldn't flow through.

Nicole chuckled desolately. She knew that these guys had all come to watch her get beheaded. This was a human's desire to jump at inferiority. People liked to butt in all the time; as long as there was something interesting to watch, they wouldn't care about anyone else's pain at all. Who would care about her current opinion and state of mind?

A middle-aged man with a thick and broad build wearing aristocrat's clothing walked up to the stage and said in a stern voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure you've already received information about this. That's right...this person next to me is the brazen thief that dared to steal from our city lord's residence."

The middle-aged man sharply surveyed the crowd as he said in an icy tone, "I know...that there are definitely many thieves in this crowd. I'll take this opportunity to warn everyone here that you cannot just steal from anyone; she is a good example."

The man turned to coldly stare at Nicole and he said, "Since you dared to display such vile behavior at our city lord's residence, you must be aware that you will die. Go on obediently, and don't become a thief again in your next life." The middle-aged man nonchalantly gestured at the executioner, then turned around to walk off the stone platform.

After receiving the middle-aged man's order, two warriors on the

platform grabbed Nicole's shoulders and pushed her down. At the same time, another warrior drew a glinting, steel blade from his back. Seeing this, the crowd couldn't help but hold their breaths; they knew that the execution was about to begin.

Everyone watched as the warrior with the blade smirked and casually swung around the steel blade in his hand. He neared Nicole and said, "Don't worry, my blade is very fast. I promise you won't feel any pain; a single slash is enough to behead you."

Hearing the warrior's words, Nicole stared at the dazzling steel blade in front of her, her mind in complete chaos. She was just about to leave this world for eternity. This sky, this earth, this sunlight, were all things she'd never see again. Her head would soon be chopped off. Her warm blood would flow throughout the entire stone platform, but nobody would feel sad about her death. The people would only shout in delight for having been able to see a priceless scene for free.

Nicole closed her eyes. Glittering tears quickly flowed down, dropping from her eyelashes. Not being afraid of death didn't mean she wanted to die. If one had a choice, who would be willing to just die like that?

"Ready." The guard captain on the platform said in a solemn voice. The blade-wielding warrior slowly lifted his weapon, both his hands gripping the hilt. His fingers were white from the amount of strength he was clutching the blade with; it was clear to see that he was already prepared. A single command was enough for him to slice off the other party's head in one fell sweep. Otherwise, it'd be too embarrassing; what kind of warrior was he if

he couldn't even behead someone in front of all those people?

“Execute.” Following the guard captain's bellow, the blade-wielding warrior suddenly shouted, and he bent down as he exerted strength in his arms. The shining blade flashed with a brilliant light, and made the sound of thunder as it swiftly slashed down with an earth-shattering power.

Everyone watching the scene felt their hearts jump to their throats, their pulse racing at a much faster rate than normal. Their eyes were wide open, as if afraid that blinking would cause them to miss the critical moment.

At the same time, Nicole bit her lip hard. She was finally going to die. Even though she still had important things left to, even though she still had regrets, she couldn't do anything about it. The instant she was about to meet her death, Nicole raised her head. The observers that were closer to her could see that unexpectedly, there was a wide smile on Nicole's face. Was this how one felt when facing imminent death? It didn't seem as scary as she had imagined.

“Fwish...clang.”

The instant Nicole came to this realization of the meaning of life and broke through the disillusionment of life and death, a brilliant, blue light suddenly crossed Nicole's vision. The next moment...a clear sound rang out above Nicole's head.

Chapter 260: Breaking Out Of Encirclement

(Part 2)

“Clang bang...” Nicole stared at the source of the blue light in complete shock. In her daze, she didn’t even notice that the half of the sharp metal blade that had been right next to her neck had fallen to the ground and disappeared.

From the beginning to the end, Nicole hadn’t believed that anyone would come and rescue her. Although she hadn’t lived for very long, Nicole clearly understood the reason for this; nobody would be stupid enough to rescue someone at this kind of place. Wasn’t that just courting death?

Of course, Nicole had also fantasized about Suo Jia coming to save her before. But this was just a delusion; Nicole knew that the thought of this becoming a reality could only happen in her dreams. She and Suo Jia weren’t that close to each other, and their relationship vaguely seemed like that of master and servant. She was a captive as well. Suo Jia had absolutely no reason to come rescue her.

But now, Nicole was shocked to discover that her dreams had actually come true. The blue light just now had been Suo Jia’s Ice Arrow Technique. Nicole saw Suo Jia standing where the blue light had originated from. He stood there, warmly smiling at Nicole.

Nicole was stunned for a moment, before she suddenly shouted, “Don’t be stupid, Suo Jia. I’m just your captive, there’s no reason for you to come save me. Hurry up and leave this place, or else

you'll die."

Suo Jia lazily smiled and rubbed his head, "Girl, didn't we already agree that you have to bring me to the border before leaving me? How could you flee halfway through? I refuse to accept that."

Nicole's body shook, and her tears quickly blurred her vision. She looked intently at Suo Jia, and unconsciously murmured, "It's not like I wanted to run away, you idiot. If you wanted to save me, you should've come up with a better excuse."

Seeing Nicole's emotion-filled face, Suo Jia chuckled and replied, "You shouldn't feel too touched, I'm just really bored to the point where I really wanted to find a person and save them for fun. How could I not participate in something so exciting? You'd better coordinate well with me." Suo Jia stretched his arms out to split the crowd, and began to charge towards the stone platform.

Seeing Suo Jia approaching, the guard captain's expression changed. Since he didn't know the strength of the enemy, he didn't yet dare to be careless. Who knew if there were other enemies hiding in the darkness?

The guard captain suddenly turned to his side to tell the two soldiers holding Nicole down, "One of you two, go stop that brat. The other one, hold this girl down and immediately execute her."

Following his command, one of the soldiers holding Nicole down immediately charged out, drawing the large sword on his back as

he jumped off the platform to welcome Suo Jia. The other soldier reached out to press Nicole down with both hands. At the same time, the executioner with the broken blade borrowed another steel blade and lifted the glittering edge up once more. At this moment...Suo Jia was still 30 meters away from the platform.

Actually, Suo Jia had arrived ages ago. But this whole time, he hadn't managed to push his way through the extremely packed, crowded environment. Actually, Suo Jia was the only one that could've gotten through, since his physical strength had been greatly increased by the Endurance Potions. Even a normal warrior, without the aid of battle qi, couldn't have possibly made his way though.

Suo Jia panicked when he saw the soldier on the platform raise his blade once more. Although...Suo Jia could activate Diamond Charge and freeze all the people within a 10 meter radius, then shatter all of the ice, mass murdering wasn't in his nature after all. He was still unable to do such a merciless thing.

Powerless, Suo Jia could only take the risk and jump up. He stepped on the air, and his body rose up strangely. Only after reaching the sentinels 10 meters away from the platform did he descend to the ground again.

Of course, Suo Jia had considered directly leaping onto the platform. However...if he really did do such a thing, Nicole would definitely die. That guard captain wasn't just there for appearance; once Suo Jia was intercepted, Nicole's head would instantly fall off.

Suo Jia raised his right hand. With a blue flash, a Mysterious Ice Arrow whizzed out and instantly crossed the empty space, flying straight at the steel blade in the executioner's hand in attempt to stop the executioner's downward slash once more. But this time, Suo Jia clearly hadn't been able to achieve his goal; the guard captain had long since noticed Suo Jia's actions, and he quickly pulled out the double-edged sword at his waist. In an instant, the guard captain's battle qi erupted outwards, and the Mysterious Ice Arrow was instantly crushed into dregs of ice.

Seeing his shot be intercepted, Suo Jia's expression abruptly changed. But without waiting for him to attack again, the approaching soldier assigned to obstruct Suo Jia had already charged over and swung his large sword at Suo Jia. At the same time, the executioner had already gathered enough energy, and he grunted. The dazzling steel blade was clearly about to descend once more.

"Tch..." Suo Jia's body turned oddly, and leapt towards the warrior's right side. However...just as the warrior waved his sword to attempt to block Suo Jia, he was shocked to discover that Suo Jia had instead appeared on the other side. The warrior's lightning fast sword only passed through empty air instead.

The warrior quickly turned around to intercept Suo Jia. Just then...Suo Jia faced the guard captain, who was currently gripping his sword as he warily watched Suo Jia. Behind him, the executioner had finally swung down his blade with all his might.

In that moment of imminent peril, Suo Jia's eyes suddenly grew extremely wide. With a wave of his right hand, an arm-thick,

crystal blue ice stream shrieked as it leapt at the guard captain like an arrow. But everyone knew that this was of no use; even if it harmed the guard captain, Nicole, who was behind him, would inevitably be decapitated.

Faced with Suo Jia's attack, the guard captain confidently brandished the sword in his hand. He already knew what Suo Jia's level of strength was, a mere Great Mage. This kind of attack was something he could still block. After all...Suo Jia didn't dare activate any advanced, AOE attacks that could possibly doom Nicole as well. Magic didn't have eyes, after all.

The double-edged sword effortlessly swung down. He was confident that this was definitely enough to deflect the other party's attack, as he understood both himself and his enemy.

Countless people watched as the ice stream arrived in front of the guard captain at lightning speed. But...the 'clang' sound of a collision that everyone had been expecting, didn't happen. Just as the two sides were about to come into contact, the ice stream had suddenly changed into an agile snake, and with a swift turn, bent around the captain guard and continued charging forwards.

"Ding." Finally, the clang that they had waited forever for rang out. But...this clang wasn't from the guard captain; the ice stream had managed to block the blade of the executioner behind him just in time. The sound of collision had been generated by the steel blade and the ice stream.

The steel blade had been less than a centimeter away from Nicole's neck. The dazzling steel blade that had been swung down

with all of the executioner's strength was sliced in half by the ice stream, making the blade unable to continue its descent. Firstly, because the warrior's strength had been completely exhausted, and secondly...because he had been completely frozen.

Originally, the warrior's strength in addition to the energy he'd stored for so long just now should've definitely been enough to deflect the arm-thick ice stream. But...the instant the two made contact, Suo Jia had activated Freezing Touch from the ice stream. Thus, when the two had touched, the executioner's hands had been completely frozen. Unless those solid ice layers were broken, there was no way the executioner would be able to budge at all.

Had the matter ended just like that? No...Nicole was still in the grasp of the other warrior. Having anticipated this long before he'd acted, Suo Jia had already thought of a countermeasure.

The lightning fast ice stream's incomparably sharp, pointed end instantly pierced the throat of the warrior holding Nicole down. Because of the ice stream's extremely low temperature, the warrior's head instantly froze into an ice cube, freezing the blood before it had even gotten the chance to flow down.

From the beginning until now, everything that Suo Jia did had undoubtedly been a complete success. He'd first controlled the ice stream to circle the intercepting guard captain, then immediately seized the executioner's blade, using Freezing Touch to freeze his hands. At the same time, the sharp, pointed end of the ice stream had penetrated the warrior's throat.

In a single assault, Suo Jia had successfully achieved three things

at once. In addition, skill and strength hadn't been the only things necessary to achieve this; wisdom and impromptu reactions were even more important. Suo Jia hadn't known how many enemies would be present before arriving, nor did he know how they planned on killing Nicole. All his actions had been come up with on the spot depending on the situation; there was no way he could've prepared beforehand.

However, although everything had gone smoothly, there was still a long way until Suo Jia could successfully rescue Nicole. The warrior that had been passed by Suo Jia activated an attack from behind. At the same time, the guard captain seemed to have also sensed something happening behind him. He turned his body and brandished the sword in his hand, prepared to personally deal with Nicole. No matter what, this matter couldn't be ruined; this was related to Endless Clouds City's reputation.

With a deep breath, Suo Jia instantly materialized the Water God's Shield, allowing the warrior from behind continue to attack heavily. At the same time, Suo Jia controlled the ice stream to first push Nicole aside. Then, the ice stream curled up and quickly rolled out towards the guard captain.

Originally, the ice stream was supposed to circle around from the guard captain's left side, then go back from the right and encircle him. Like a python, it attempted to coil around his body.

The guard captain couldn't help but feel astonishment and fury at the ice stream closing in on him. This was the first time he'd ever seen such a strange and troublesome mage in his entire life. He finally realized that whether or not he could successfully kill

Nicole wasn't important; he first needed to preserve his own life.

The guard captain suddenly extended his sword to deflect the coiling ice stream. However...as soon as the sword touched the ice stream, a bone-chilling, cold air invaded and attacked the sword. Luckily, the guard captain had noticed it early, and used battle qi to disperse the freezing air. But despite this, he was unable to come out unharmed; Freezing Touch activated, and instantly formed a solid, 2 meter tall ice cube, imprisoning the enemy inside it. Unless the ice cube was shattered, there was no way he'd be able to escape.

For a moment, the guard captain could only stay confined in the cube. His eyes widened as he saw Suo Jia leap up to the platform, scooped Nicole up in his arms, then shoot a few Ice Arrows to force that last warrior back. He then leisurely leapt off the platform and blended into the crowd. Finding him at this point was pretty much impossible.

Chapter 261: So It Was Like This (Part 1)

As soon as he slipped into the crowd, Suo Jia untied Nicole's bindings. The next part was simple; in this kind of environment, Nicole didn't need Suo Jia's help at all. Once she was free to move, she'd be ten times harder to catch than Suo Jia. Just finding her would be an impossible task.

They could no longer return to the hotel, so Suo Jia and Nicole agreed to meet outside the city. The two then split up, heading outside from different directions. Ferreting them out was completely impossible; both Suo Jia and Nicole were stealth experts.

Their journeys went smoothly. It was evening by the time Suo Jia had finally reached the arranged destination to meet up with Nicole. The two didn't dare to stop, and rushed along their route all through the night, before finally stopping the next afternoon to rest and eat. Suo Jia no longer dared to consume the potions to restore his physical strength and spirit, so he'd die of exhaustion without rest.

The two silently ate their dry rations without saying a word. It wasn't that Suo Jia was unwilling to speak, but that he had nothing to say. Nicole also didn't know what to say; Suo Jia had saved her life. How was she supposed to thank him?

Money, well, Nicole was absolutely certain that Suo Jia was extremely well off, and could be classified as an extremely wealthy and powerful person. The amount of money that she had was so minor that he wouldn't even glance at it. Aside from money, how

else could she repay him?

After contemplating this for a long time, Nicole finally realized that the only thing she could do was accompany Suo Jia to adventure through the Greater Trade Routes. Unfortunately, she had something extremely important that she needed to do, and was unable to leave at the moment. Thus, she couldn't agree to go with Suo Jia.

Nicole finally raised her head and said in a low voice, "City Lord Suo Jia, I'm extremely grateful for you saving me. But please understand, despite this, I still cannot accompany you to the Greater Trade Routes. I still need to do something that's even more important than my life."

Suo Jia stuffed the food in his hand into his mouth, took a large swig of water to wash it down, then said indifferently, "I didn't rescue you because I wanted you to join me on the Greater Trade Routes. After being together for so long, I've already considered you one of my friends."

"What?!" Nicole shouted in astonishment and stood up. She hadn't imagined that Suo Jia would say something like that; it was really too unexpected.

Suo Jia dusted off the crumbs on his hands, and said calmly, "As a friend, I find something very strange; why would you go out and steal money? I know you're a thief, as well as a treasure hunter. But if I recall correctly, hidden treasure normally isn't within someone's house, but in the desolate wilderness, right?"

Nicole couldn't help but flush at this. What Suo Jia said was right; while thieves could steal other people's possessions, as well as items, wallets, etc in the city, those were things that only thieves did, not treasure hunters. Treasure hunters would never do something so tasteless.

Suo Jia looked at the blushing Nicole and continued, "Moreover, even if you wanted to steal, there's no reason to go as far as brazenly stealing from the city lord's residence. Isn't that like plucking the whiskers off a tiger's mouth, are you tired of living?"

Faced with Suo Jia's question, Nicole could only lower her head in shame, unwilling to reply. Suo Jia helplessly sighed and said, "If I didn't guess wrongly, you really need money, right?"

Nicole hesitated for a moment before finally nodding in reply, "That's right...I really need money, really need a lot, a lot of money."

Suo Jia furrowed his brows and asked curiously, "Although I can't say I know you that well, but you don't look like you're really the type of person infatuated with money. At the very least, you aren't a slave for money. In that case, why do you need so much of it?"

Faced with Suo Jia's question, Nicole fell silent once more, refusing to say a single word. Seeing her conflicted expression, Suo Jia could only sigh and say, "As your friend, I'm just concerned for you. I only wish to be able to help you. I hope that you can tell me

anything that concerns you. Then, I won't just watch from the sidelines."

Nicole suddenly lifted her head to gaze deeply at Suo Jia, but she soon lowered her head once more and shook her head, "No...I'm very grateful for your kindness, but you can't help me. The amount of money I need isn't small; I need a very, very great amount."

"Alright..." Suo Jia nodded and calmly smiled, "How about this, as long as you tell me what's troubling you, then I'll definitely come up with a way to help you. Trust me, I can do it."

"You," Nicole lifted her head in shock as she said incredulously, "I know you have the ability to help me, but we're just normal friends. You have no reason to help me so much. I..."

Suo Jia abruptly lifted his hand to stop Nicole from speaking any further, and he firmly stated, "You still don't understand me, so please don't try to look at me with logic. According to logic, my disruption of the execution ground was already incomprehensible, but didn't I do it anyways?"

Nicole's eyes lit up. That's right...although they were already safe now, Nicole knew that the execution ground incident was still very dangerous. It could be said that Suo Jia had risked his own life to save her. If he was willing to even give up on his own life, then was there anything that he'd be unwilling to sacrifice?

Nicole finally steadied her resolve, and nodded. "Fine. Since you

insist on asking, then I'll just tell you; no matter whether you help me or not, I won't blame you."

She took a deep breath to settle her thoughts, then declared, "Although my family's fame for fighting prowess is spread far and wide, it's just a name that had been established by our ancestors. In reality, our family's been gradually fading out of the thief circle the past few generations."

"Oh," Suo Jia looked at Nicole strangely and asked in confusion. "That shouldn't be so; if your ancestors are so famous, there's no reason for the descendants to not follow in their footsteps."

Nicole replied flatly, "Perhaps you find it really hard to understand, but this is all very normal. There's no reason aside from just not enjoying it. My parents still feel really strongly about power and influence, and they don't like having such a risky career."

Suo Jia nodded in comprehension. Although at first glance, this reason seemed far-fetched, it was actually the most important reason. If they didn't like it, they naturally wouldn't want to deal with it; people always enjoyed the things they liked.

As treasure hunters, they could possess endless wealth. However, they'd never have any power or influence to speak of. Since Nicole's parents felt so strongly about power, they'd naturally abandon their previous line of work.

Nicole continued, "You should also know that as an influential

family of treasure hunters, especially people like us that are famous for their fighting prowess, we are extremely wealthy. With a road paved with gold, my parents quickly became aristocrats, and smoothly entered the aristocrats circle.”

“Hm...” Suo Jia nodded. He knew that although money wasn’t omnipotent, there were few things that it couldn’t do. At the very least, money was able to turn someone into a noble.

Suo Jia asked in confusion, “Isn’t that a good thing? Since they became aristocrats and have so much money, how have they fallen to this point?”

Nicole fiercely clenched her teeth and said, “The aristocrats are filthy things. Their greed is insatiable; after experiencing the sweet taste of power, they became even more avaricious. They kept seeking riches from my parents. When my parents were no longer able to bear the heavy burden and refused, those so-called nobles finally revealed their shameless faces.”

Nicole’s eyes teared up as she said grievously, “Urged by their greed, my parents were framed. It was claimed that they were planning to defect to another country, so my whole family was banished. Our assets were also completely removed as punishment. Only after I manage to collect 10 billion frads will they release my family.”

“Hm,” Suo Jia asked in confusion, “Didn’t you say that your parents had already died? Then why are you talking about being released now?”

Nicole shook her head and patiently replied, “That’s right, my parents died 10 years ago. The empire’s enemies must be beheaded. Even the family possessions are distributed amongst the soldiers. If it weren’t for the fact that I’d told them the locations of all my family’s hidden treasures, I’d probably be a slave soldier right now.”

A warm expression unfolded on Nicole’s face as she said in a low voice, “My parents are no longer here, but...my younger brother and two younger sisters still are. I have to collect 10 billion in order for them to regain their freedom. For the sake of my family, no matter how great of a price I must pay, I have to gather 10 billion frads and rescue them out.”

“Heavens.” Suo Jia inwardly sighed in admiration. The frad was Kaya Empire’s currency. One frad could be exchanged for 2 gold. In other words, Nicole needed to gather 20 billion gold to rescue her younger siblings.

Suo Jia asked in concern, “In that case, how much money have you managed to collect during the past 10 years?”

Chapter 262: So It Was Like This (Part 2)

Nicole sighed and bitterly smiled, “I’ve been working hard to earn money, accepting any job that gives a lot of compensation. One of these jobs was to assassinate you. But despite this, I’ve only managed to gather 2 billion frads, I’m still missing 8 billion.”

Suo Jia glanced at Nicole in admiration. Although 2 billion frads wasn’t a lot of money to Suo Jia, he knew that it was extremely difficult for an average person to earn that much. This must’ve been even more harder than difficult for someone like Nicole.

Suo Jia wasn’t one that thought of money as easy to earn. Actually, if the Fourth Prince hadn’t been protecting him from behind the scenes, Suo Jia wouldn’t have been able to earn that much money either. Even if he did, he wouldn’t have been able to keep it. Nicole’s parents were the best example.

Suo Jia looked up and asked Nicole, “I don’t understand, why don’t you just secretly rescue your siblings out? Wouldn’t that be much more convenient?”

“Haha...” Nicole let out a strangled laugh and shook her head, “Those old, avaricious aristocrats are indeed very greedy, but that doesn’t mean that they’re lacking in intelligence. Every one of them is even more cunning than a fox; they guarded against a trick like that ages ago. They placed slave necklaces on my siblings’ bodies, so it would be meaningless even if I broke them out.”

“Slave necklaces!” Suo Jia couldn’t help but cry out in shock. Suo

Jia had seen such things before; Dawn's slave army had many people wearing such things. Unless unlocked by a key, they couldn't be removed. It wouldn't matter how far the wearer ran away, once the key was destroyed, the necklace would shoot out a poisonous needle to instantly kill the wearer.

Suo Jia nodded helplessly, and contemplated the issue for a long time. If it were before, he wouldn't necessarily be willing to spend so much money. But it was different now; to Suo Jia, Nicole was extremely important. Having her as a guide was the most suitable option. After all...she had 10 ancestors that had successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes, and one of them had even become one of its hegemony. There was no one more appropriate than Nicole to become his guide.

In addition, he still hadn't yet entered the Greater Trade Routes. Suo Jia knew that once he stepped into the Greater Trade Routes, nobody would guarantee that he'd be able to survive the ordeal. Moreover, money was just scrap metal there; only a certain type of currency was distributed throughout the Greater Trade Routes, and it couldn't be exchanged.

Some people may wonder, although it couldn't be used now, couldn't one use it after leaving the Greater Trade Routes? But really, this train of thought was stupid. Suo Jia wasn't going to play around; if he could come back alive from the Greater Trade Routes, that would already be an extremely famous feat. By that time, how could he possibly care for something as trifling as money? Even occupying an empire would be extremely easy to achieve.

Suo Jia resolutely came to a decision. He looked up at Nicole and said, “That means as long as I’m willing to pay the remaining amount of money for you, you can accompany me on the Greater Trade Routes, right?”

“What?!” Nicole jumped up in astonishment and said in disbelief. “What did you just say? You said...that you’d help me repay the remaining amount?”

Suo Jia nodded with a smile, and pulled out two amethyst cards from his pocket. As he tossed them over to Nicole, he said, “There’s 20 billion gold in here. Go exchange it into frads, then rescue your siblings. I believe...that I need you.”

Nicole tightly gripped the two amethyst cards in her hand, and said incredulously, “Heavens. You’re really willing to help me. I’m not dreaming, am I?”

Suo Jia smiled and replied, “Trust me, you’re definitely not dreaming. There’s no time to lose; you’d better start moving now and complete this task as quickly as possible.”

“But...” Nicole gave a conflicted frown and said, “But even if you’re helping me, there’s no need for this much money. I’ve already returned 2 billion frads. You only need to...”

Suo Jia shook his head and said calmly, “Don’t forget, after your siblings are released, they’ll need spending money as well. Just give them the remaining amount.”

Nicole stared deeply into Suo Jia's eyes and after a long while... Nicole firmly replied, "Alright, I'm unable to reject your kindness so, from today onwards, I've sold my life to you."

Suo Jia didn't show any sign of approval or objection to Nicole's words, and simply smiled. After experiencing so many things, Suo Jia could no longer easily believe anyone; in this world, loyalty didn't matter. That so-called devotion was just a bargaining chip for betrayal that was too low. Suo Jia didn't need much; he just needed Nicole to lead him to advance through the Greater Trade Routes, There, Suo Jia could increase his strength very quickly, and would also be able to find his father.

Suo Jia took a deep breath and smiled, "Ok, ok, don't delay it any longer. Just go do it now. I'll continue on this road, and wait for you at the most expensive hotel in the next city. After you've finished your matter, come by and pick me up."

"No." Nicole shook her head and said excitedly, "We don't need to split up. All we have to do is slightly alter our path, and go in a somewhat roundabout way instead. That's because...my siblings are in Kaya Empire's capital, Brent City."

Hearing Nicole's words, Suo Jia was overjoyed at the turn of events. He urged Nicole to quickly lead the way. During the next half a month, the two of them swiftly progressed forwards without rest until they finally reached the capital city of Brent.

After staying in a hotel within the city, Nicole left excitedly with the money in hand, while Suo Jia waited in the hotel for a few days. After Nicole finished dealing with the matter, she'd return,

and then they'd be able to head for the Greater Trade Routes.

During the next several days, Suo Jia stayed in the room and trained. He completely lost track of time as he immersed himself in his training. His growth had been extremely fast; every day, he could clearly sense that his relationship with the magical elements was getting closer and more harmonized.

Finally, on the evening of the third day, Nicole blankly returned to the hotel. She silently entered Suo Jia's room and sat down hard on his bed with an expression of despair.

After seeing Nicole return, Suo Jia couldn't help but stop his training and ask in concern, "What's wrong, Nicole? How did the matter go? Did you rescue your siblings out?"

Nicole's body shook. She slowly turned around and looked at Suo Jia, then...fat teardrops quickly gathered in her large eyes.

"They...cannot be trusted. They actually tricked me." Nicole spat out resentfully.

"Hm." Suo Jia gravely knit his brows together and said, "First, stop crying. Tell me clearly, what exactly happened? Believe in me; no matter what happened, we'll definitely be able to think of a way to resolve it."

Chapter 263: See Who's Shadier (Part 1)

Nicole choked with emotion as she looked at Suo Jia and she said pitifully, “I finally managed to convert the money and hand over the remaining amount to Archduke Roland at his residence. However...he refused to fulfill his promise, and wasn't willing to release my siblings. He also said that because I had dragged the deal on for so long, he wanted to collect interest. I have to gather another ten billion frads to give him. Only then would he release my siblings.”

“Bang.” Suo Jia indignantly slammed a fist down on the table as he shouted, “That Archduke whatever Roland is just too despicable. He even dared to break his promise to deceive a child; he deserves to die.”

Suo Jia shook his head as his fury grew in his heart. Actually, he should've guessed ages ago that the outcome would be something like this. If he were Archduke Roland, he wouldn't have just released a money tree like Nicole either.

Suo Jia said in a low voice, “This Archduke Roland is too shameless. According to his actions, it looks to me like you'll never be able to retrieve your siblings. Even if you did gather another 10 billion frads, he'd find some other excuse to keep demanding money from you. He's already gotten your life in the palm of his hands.”

“I...what should I do?” Nicole was beside herself with panic.

“Hmph,” Suo Jia coldly snorted. He then darkly smiled, “Nicole, I’m sure that you also realize that you can’t ever regain your siblings while in Archduke Roland’s scheme.”

After a moment of hesitation, Nicole, who had always been extremely intelligent as well, soon understood the situation. She looked at Suo Jia in sudden realization, and urged, “Then what should I do? It can’t be that...I have to be pushed around like that for the rest of my life. He warned me that I have to give him at least 1 billion frads per year for the next few years. If I couldn’t hand over that amount by the end of the year, he’d kill off one of my sisters. If I go two years without being able to pay, he’d kill two; if nothing happens over three years, then the sole male member of our family, my younger brother, will be killed.”

“Haha...” Suo Jia sneered and replied, “He’s saying that because he’s afraid you’ll stop doing it. This is basically chaining you down so that you have to it at all costs.”

“City Lord Suo Jia, I know that you’re skilled, and have quite a few ideas. Help me think of something, I don’t want to spend my whole life bound like this. Most importantly, I have to grant my siblings freedom. My family’s future depends on them.” Nicole said passionately.

Suo Jia shook his head and said thoughtfully, “Don’t keep calling me City Lord this, City Lord that. We’re already friends, and we’ll probably be important companions in the future as well. Just call me Young Master, I like that title.”

“Hah....” Nicole kneaded her forehead and bitterly smiled, “What

kind of timing is that; how are you able to even think of such things right now? Well, as long as you think of a way to help me, I'll call you Young Master, or whatever you'd like."

Suo Jia glanced at her. He really wondered, if he asked her to call him her husband, would she be willing to do that as well? It was a pity that this clearly wasn't the time to be joking around though; it was best if he just concentrated on coming up with a countermeasure first.

In the end, Suo Jia begrudgingly shook his head and said, "It looks like there aren't any more refined methods right now. The only thing I can think of right now is a cruder way. You should think it through..."

"Damn..." Nicole shook her head with a bitter smile and said, "What kind of time is it now? Why would I care about whether it's crude or not? As long as there's a way to rescue out my siblings, it doesn't matter how boorish it is."

"Alright then..." Suo Jia smiled and nodded, "In that case, let's immediately start moving. We'll go to Archduke Roland's residence and request to see him, and just say that you want to meet your siblings."

"This..." Nicole asked Suo Jia in bewilderment, "But...I just met them this morning. Why would I go to see them again? What exactly are you thinking?"

Suo Jia waved his hand and leisurely said, "What's so hard about

saying that? Just say that you're about to spend several nights in a row diligently earning money, so you want to see them one more time before you leave. Isn't that fine?"

"But...what do I do after seeing my siblings?" Nicole asked, still not understanding.

Suo Jia approached Nicole's ear and whispered to her for a while...then Nicole suddenly lifted her head and gave Suo Jia an incredulous look. "Heavens, will this kind of method work? What if..."

Suo Jia firmly cut across her words and said, "There's no 'what if'. As long as you do as I said, you'll definitely be successful. Trust me, I understand human nature more than you."

"Alright..." Nicole said after a moment of hesitation, "No matter what, this is the last chance. Regardless of what happens, I will still believe in you. I'll just try going with what you said."

Suo Jia chuckled and nodded happily, "Ok, you should go prepare yourself. I'll also go out to make some arrangements. Absolutely no mistakes can be allowed while carrying this out."

Nicole gratefully nodded, and quickly left the room. Suo Jia's plan was extremely brazen, as well as quite annoying. From beginning to end, not a single mishap could occur. Otherwise, the whole act could end up failing.

As night gradually drew nearer, Nicole rushed to the city lord's residence. After sending in a message, Nicole finally entered the mansion. As soon as she entered the hall, Archduke Roland's coarse voice rang out, "You brat, hurry up and go earn some money. Why do you constantly run here? Don't worry, as long as you obediently do your work, I'll definitely take good care of your siblings. I'll make sure that they don't suffer at all."

Nicole subconsciously swallowed loudly, then forced himself to smile, "Archduke Roland, it's already so late. I originally hadn't planned on coming again, but the task Archduke has bestowed on me is too important. To do this, I must go earn money for many nights in succession. That's why, I wanted to meet with my siblings another time before leaving, as I don't know how long it'll be until I meet them again."

Archduke Roland knit his brows in impatience and really wanted to refuse. But in order to send her off to work hard on earning money, Archduke Roland patiently said, "Alright, then I'll let you see them again. But after this, you have to work hard to raise money."

"Hehe...of course, definitely." Nicole nodded furiously with a smile on her face.

Under Archduke Roland's orders, Nicole's siblings were quickly brought over. Seeing her siblings come out, Nicole's heart couldn't help but begin to race; she knew that Suo Jia must have already started moving.

In reality, since the doors to the mansion had first opened, Suo

Jia had used the Concealment Ring to change into a hidden state and had been following Nicole this whole time through the mansion and into the hall. According to plan, now that Nicole's siblings had been brought out, it was his turn to make a move.

Rustling sounds could be heard as a freezing ice stream began to wrap around Archduke Roland's body from bottom upwards. By the time Archduke Roland had realized this was happening, the ice stream had instantly coiled itself around him a few times, tightly restricting both his legs and arms until it was so solid that he couldn't move at all.

Archduke Roland wasn't actually weak. In reality...he was an extremely powerful earth elemental mage. Even Suo Jia wouldn't be his opponent if they faced off head-on. This was also why Nicole had been worried about this plan.

However, Suo Jia didn't see it this way. With the help of the Concealment Ring, he could easily approach Archduke Roland without being sensed, then manipulate the ice stream to control him. The ice stream used water manipulation, not magic, so no matter how powerful Archduke Roland was, he was already under control by the time he'd made this discovery.

Archduke Roland quickly calmed down. He narrowed his eyes dangerously and said in a deep voice, "Nicole, this is your arrangement isn't it?"

Nicole had already thrown caution to the wind by now. She straightened her body and said furiously, "That's right, this is all part of my plan. You're too avaricious; I don't want to be under

your control my whole life. I will definitely break away from your command, even if I have to die.”

“Hmph.” Archduke Roland said in a dangerous tone, “Very good...I hadn’t imagined that after not seeing you for several years, you’d have already grown so much, to the point where you can even scheme. However...don’t forget that your siblings’ lives are still in my hands. If you dare to injure me, your siblings will definitely die. I guarantee it.”

Chapter 264: See Who's Shadier (Part 2)

Nicole shuddered at Archduke Roland's threat, and her expression was no longer as resolute as before either. In Roland's eyes, her siblings' lives were higher than her own life; nothing was more important than them. Nicole's heart began to tremble at these words.

However, while Nicole felt fear, Suo Jia definitely didn't. Although...Suo Jia was only 15 years old, 3 years younger than Nicole, Suo Jia had been fighting and scheming around since he was young, so making crafty plots and conspiracies was something he was 100 times more skilled at than Nicole was.

Completely ignoring Roland's threat, Suo Jia pulled out a bronze necklace from his chest. He then reached out to place it around the completely bound Archduke Roland's neck.

"Hehe..." Suo Jia smiled smugly and said with pride, "Archduke Roland, you're not the only one that puts slave necklaces on others. Although these things are a bit annoying to make, it's extremely easy to use; snapping it on is all it takes."

As he spoke, Suo Jia's body left its concealed state. Seeing Suo Jia suddenly appear before him, Archduke Roland gaped in shock and shouted angrily, "Who are you?! You dare to break into my Archduke mansion; aren't you afraid of the law?"

"Law." Suo Jia glanced at Roland in disdain and spat out, "Your law only applies to you citizens of Kaya Empire. I'm someone from

Holy Light Empire; your law doesn't affect me at all."

Suo Jia looked at Roland in glee and said, "How about it? Tell me, how does personally wearing a slave necklace feel? Doesn't it feel super refreshing?"

"What?" Archduke Roland finally responded. What Suo Jia had put on him just now was actually a slave necklace? Archduke Roland's face couldn't help but turn deathly pale.

Suo Jia glanced at Archduke Roland in contempt before turning around to say to Nicole, "Alright then, why are you still here? Hurry up and go do what you need to do. Now isn't the time to think twice; didn't you want to save your siblings?"

After being pushed by Suo Jia, Nicole bit down hard and ground out, "I'm willing to do anything for my siblings. I'll go over to them now." Her body slowly faded out, and skillfully disappeared completely before Suo Jia and Roland.

"You, what do you want to do?" Archduke Roland asked in alarm.

"Hehe..." Suo Jia chuckled darkly. "Nothing much. Since you put slave necklaces around Nicole's siblings, we just followed suit, and placed them on your sons and grandchildren. They have to wear at least one of these pretty necklaces each."

"You." Archduke Roland's eyes grew wide as he glared at Suo Jia

in fury. But soon after, he let out a sigh of despair. Anything he could do to others could obviously be done to him as well. The matter was quite simple, but nobody had ever dared to do it before. After all, those that had this ability and this kind of chance to were very few in number.

“Ya.” A sharp voice came from outside the door. Suo Jia suddenly turned around to look over, and saw a single woman shouting in shock from her covered mouth. It was clear that Suo Jia’s actions had been caught.

Following the woman’s sharp cry, a jumble of running sounds could be heard from every direction as countless guards quickly sped over to the hall. Suo Jia’s expression changed slightly, and he silently activated the Concealment Ring, his body once again hiding in the air.

Soon, many warriors poured out from the front and back doors. Seeing how Archduke Roland was tightly wrapped in an ice stream, the spectators couldn’t help but cry out in shock. Their sharp sounds loudly rang out through the entire residence.

While still hidden, Suo Jia couldn’t help but secretly sigh in admiration. Just like that, the entire hall had already filled with 30+ experts. There were also more than 300 soldiers pouring out like water, completely surrounding the main building. Even if Suo Jia could transform into a mosquito, he couldn’t have possibly been able to escape.

However, Suo Jia didn’t really want to run. Even if he could, what would happen to Nicole’s siblings? The reason Suo Jia had

come this time was to completely resolve this matter.

It was clear to see that Archduke Roland also knew this. Just as Suo Jia dispersed the ice stream, Archduke Roland said with an ashen face, “What are you all panicking for? All of you go back. Without my orders, none of you are to even approach the main building.”

Although they didn’t understand what was going on, none of them dared to go against the Archduke’s commands. After exchanging glances with each other, the soldiers all turned around to leave the hall. In a moment, the entire area fell silence once more.

“Phew...” Archduke Roland let out a breath and said, “Alright, since things have already reached this point, we should have a proper talk. Go on and show yourself.”

Suo Jia’s and Nicole’s figures appeared on Roland’s left and right. Roland looked deep into Nicole’s eyes and said, “I admit that I had been wrong in the past. But...let’s just end the matter there. I’ll help you release your siblings from their necklaces, and you remove the necklaces on my family as well.”

Nicole excitedly clenched her hands into fists and said, “Are...are you serious? Then that’s really great. Let’s promi—”

“Wait,” Before Nicole had finished speaking, Suo Jia suddenly interrupted. “Archduke Roland, you seem to think I’m an idiot. You don’t have any other choice right now; immediately release

Nicole's siblings from their necklaces. As for the ones around your family, we'll send people to escort them over here after we've secured our safety."

"That won't do, that absolutely won't do. I can't put my and my family's lives in your hands. Either you release them now, or everyone simultaneously meets their ends." Archduke Roland hissed.

"Pfft..." Suo Jia sniggered and lazily replied, "What are you thinking? If I release them all now, then do we still have a chance of living? As soon as we release you from the necklace, we'll be surrounded and killed right here."

Hearing this, Nicole couldn't help but cover her mouth in fear. Just now, her mind had been focused completely on saving her siblings, and she had almost agreed to Archduke Roland's suggestions. After hearing Suo Jia's words, she finally realized that this suggestion couldn't be followed at all.

Nicole wasn't stupid or dumb. The only reason her judgment ability was so low right now was because her mind was in disarray from worrying. Since the matter involved her beloved siblings, she couldn't properly use her brain.

Suo Jia continued, "Archduke Roland, you have to understand the current circumstances. You don't have a choice. Immediately release Nicole's siblings from their necklaces. Then, after we're in the clear, I'll naturally send people to bring you keys."

Archduke Roland opened his mouth anxiously, but Suo Jia interrupted him before he spoke, “No need to say anything else. I refuse any other negotiations. Right now, I’m giving you two choices: either you immediately release the necklaces and wait until we’re safe before receiving the key, or you let us go right now. Either way, you’re all wearing necklaces, so I’m not afraid of you harming us.”

Nicole looked at Archduke Roland in concern. This was the most critical moment; this was the one point that wasn’t completely in their control. Who knew if Archduke Roland would agree to this condition?

Suo Jia shot a glance at Nicole, and shook his head. He smiled as he turned around to say to Archduke Roland, “Don’t say that I didn’t give you a chance. We’re all empty-handed, as frail as a blade of grass. We couldn’t possibly compare to someone as well-built as you, Archduke Roland. If everyone is wearing necklaces, then whatever. But it’s best if give us your blessings and guarantee we’re safe. Otherwise, the moment something happens to us, regardless of whether it’s because of you or someone else, we’ll immediately destroy the keys and eliminate your entire family.”

“Urk.” Archduke Roland took a deep breath as he abruptly realized that they were no longer on equal grounds. Although both sides were wearing necklaces, Archduke Roland’s side had over 4 people victimized, while Suo Jia’s side only had 2.

Moreover, these guys were already fugitives, and dared to do anything at this point. He couldn’t let his life fall into their hands. Otherwise, on some day they were feeling unhappy, they could

easily destroy a key, and all of Roland's family would need funeral services.

Chapter 265: Frightening Battle Skills (Part 1)

From Suo Jia's firm expression, Archduke Roland could tell what the current circumstances were; Suo Jia had absolutely no qualms about bringing Nicole's siblings away with their necklaces on. Either way, Archduke Roland's family members were also wearing the necklaces, so Suo Jia wasn't afraid of the Archduke doing anything to him. However, Archduke Roland wasn't at ease with leaving his family's lives in someone else's hands.

Archduke Roland knew that his only choices were to allow them both to control each other, or first remove the necklaces on Nicole's siblings. Suo Jia would never agree to any other terms.

The Archduke seemed to have instantly aged quite a bit. He took a deep breath and said firmly to Suo Jia, "Alright, I'll give some leeway. I'll release the necklaces on the two girls first right now. However...I can't hand everything to you. No matter what, Nicole's brother must continue wearing that necklace!"

"No! That won't do...that definitely won't do!" Nicole anxiously cut in, "Anyone can become the object of persuasion except for my brother, since he's the male successor of my family! I definitely cannot let him suffer any mishaps!"

Archduke Roland steadily looked at Suo Jia and declared, "This is already my greatest compromise. You're an intelligent person, you should understand the reasons behind my decision. I can't give everything to you; that would just be equivalent to selling you my whole family's lives."

Suo Jia smirked at this. He knew that this was already the Roland's bottom line; he couldn't possibly release all three children's necklaces. If he did that, he might as well choose the first option of forcing everyone to wear necklaces.

Suo Jia smiled and nodded, replying without hesitation, "Alright, Archduke Roland. Just as you said, we're all intelligent people here. Let's just do as you suggested!"

Archduke Roland let out the breath he had been holding. Without bothering to waste any more time speaking, he waved his hand. Suddenly, two, glittering keys covered in magic symbols appeared in Archduke Roland's hands.

Seeing this, Suo Jia's eyes flashed. He quickly grabbed the two keys, and tossed them into his interspatial ring without even giving them a second glance...

"That won't do! Suo Jia...you can't agree to his proposal, it really isn't acceptable!" Nicole urgently cried out as Suo Jia put the keys away.

Seeing Nicole's intolerance, Archduke Roland said in concern, "Friend, I've already honored my promise. All that's left is for you to not break yours. Otherwise, my family will be extinguished, but your family will suffer from a similar doom."

Suo Jia smiled and said to the Archduke, "Don't worry, no matter what, I will always abide by my words. Since I've agreed to your

conditions already, I'll naturally follow them. But.....”

Suo Jia paused, giving ample time for Roland to feel anxious before continuing, “Shouldn’t you return all that money that you had managed to squeeze out of us?”

Archduke Roland nervously opened his mouth, but was unable to say anything. Luckily, Nicole chimed in just then, “Suo Jia, you’re mistaken...while I did hand the money over to Archduke Roland, he had to transfer it to His Majesty. Only the last 10 billion frads he asked for were for himself.”

Suo Jia started, and he turned around to ask Nicole, “In other words, your real enemy isn’t Archduke Roland at all, but the Emperor of Kaya Empire?”

Nicole dejectedly nodded and replied, “That’s right. Archduke Roland is just a substitute; the Emperor is the real culprit behind the curtains. In reality...my parents’ murder was also orchestrated by the Emperor.”

Suo Jia nodded in understanding. He finally understood what was going on, and glanced over at Archduke Roland, who couldn’t help but tense after seeing Suo Jia’s expression. He hurriedly said, “You can’t blackmail me. You can afford to lose my life, but not my wealth; you’d better not forget that. Moreover, I don’t really have much money for you to squander out from me.”

Suo Jia curled his lips, not bothering to waste anymore time on this topic. He called Nicole over to follow him outside the door.

Seeing that the money wasn't here with Archduke Roland, it was no longer necessary to stay in this place. Besides, Suo Jia was just about to embark on the Greater Trade Routes, so he didn't care for money anymore. Moreover...he still had a lot of money in his interspatial ring.

Where had Suo Jia gotten this money? Hadn't he used all his wealth up? In reality....before Suo Jia had left Holy Light Empire, he'd sold the recipe for the Life Potions to the dwarves. In addition, Suo Jia had gained 5x in profits from producing the potions.

Despite the fact that Suo Jia was leaving, and thus unable to keep his watch on the dwarves, Suo Jia was reassured by the dwarves' reputations. Since the dwarves regarded honor as the most important thing in their lives, they'd never try to deceive anyone. Anyone willing to do so was absolutely not a dwarf. In the millenia long history so far, nobody had ever heard of a dwarf going back on their words. It was like how fairies were never loose in morals.

Suo Jia furrowed his brows, and all of the Archduke's bodyguards watched as he slowly led Nicole and the three children out of the residence. Of course...the bodyguards did want to obstruct him, but after Archduke Roland cleared his throat once, nobody dared to intercept Suo Jia's group.

After returning to the inn, Nicole remained sulky the whole time. Although the three children had been successfully rescued out, Nicole valued her younger brother the most, as he was the last male in her family. Yet her brother was still wearing the slave necklace. This was like a constant thorn stabbing deep into her

heart, making her unable to calm down.

Suo Jia couldn't help but smile at Nicole's obvious concern. He pulled out the two keys from his interspatial ring and gently unlocked the necklaces around Nicole's younger sisters, restoring their freedom.

Suo Jia didn't pay any mind to Nicole's anxiousness. He picked up the two unlocked necklaces and their keys, then entered his bedroom and closed the door behind him, without leaving again. Nobody knew what he was doing.

Currently speaking, the slave necklaces were indeed impossible to remove. But that was just at the moment, since the alchemy arts had declined. Naturally, there was no longer anyone able to master such profound skills. But long ago, these slave necklaces weren't impossible to undo; the Atomic Alchemy Labs had been the number one expert at unlocking things!

The slave necklace was really just a lock, one that didn't tolerate any errors. Once an attempt at opening it failed, a poisonous needle would be shot out from the inside, instantly killing the wearer. Unless one's strength surpassed that of a Warrior Saint or Mage Saint, it was impossible to survive the attack.

However, since it was a lock, that meant there had to be a way to unlock it. If it were before, Suo Jia couldn't have grasped the ability to unlock it either, since he didn't know how such mechanisms functioned at all. What were the principles behind the lock, what generation product was it? Moreover, if the attempt failed, the wearer would immediately lose their life, it was an

extreme risk.

But now it was different. Suo Jia had already obtained both the keys and the slave necklaces from the two girls. After a simple inspection, he was able to figure out the theory and mechanisms of the lock, which meant that he'd be able to easily remove the slave necklace from Nicole's brother as well.

Of course, different locks required different keys to be opened. Mechanical locks required metal keys to be opened, while electronic locks didn't even have keyholes, so what use would a metal key be?

As it was an urgent matter, Suo Jia didn't dare to be careless. After studying it over and over again throughout the entire night... Suo Jia was finally able to completely comprehend the structure and principles behind the lock by the second morning. Now, he just need to verify whether the slave necklace that Nicole's brother wore was the same type of magic lock as these slave necklaces.

After eating a simple breakfast, Suo Jia, Nicole, and Nicole's siblings all gathered together. Nicole sat down in confusion and asked, "Suo Jia, is the reason you called us over so early because of the matter with the Greater Trade Routes? Don't worry, once I make arrangements for my siblings, I'll immediately set off with you!"

Suo Jia smiled and shook his head. He gestured at Nicole's younger brother, motioning for him to go over. Although Nicole's brother didn't know what Suo Jia wanted to do, he still obediently stood up and walked up to Suo Jia. He then followed Suo Jia's

commands to unbutton his collar, exposing the necklace on his neck.

Chapter 266: Frightening Battle Skills (Part 2)

Suo Jia slowly stood up and focused his attention on discerning the designs and symbols on the slave necklace. He also lightly ran his hands over the necklace, trying to verify whether or not it was the same type as the slave necklaces the girls had worn.

Seeing Suo Jia's actions, Nicole stood up in shock and cried out in horror, "What are you doing, Suo Jia! Don't fool around, this necklace can only be opened with a key. If one wants to tear it off with brute force, it's equivalent to suicide! This fact has already been proven many times. That slave necklace..."

Completely ignoring Nicole's shocked cries, Suo Jia's fingers quickly probed around the necklace for a while. As Nicole continued to rant non-stop, he gently took the slave necklace off of Nicole's brother's neck.

Nicole hadn't seemed to have realized exactly what had happened, and was still talking unceasingly. But soon, Nicole shut her mouth in shock, as she stared incredulously at the necklace in Suo Jia's hands that he had just successfully removed. This immediately caused her brain to short-circuit.

After a long time, Nicole finally exclaimed in astonishment, "How is that possible? How did you do it? You don't even have the key, yet you were able to take the necklace off!"

Suo Jia smiled, putting the necklace away. Truthfully speaking,

Suo Jia was actually feeling a bit regretful; if he had known of such a great thing earlier, he would've made each of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes wear one, and see whether they still dared to betray him then!

Suo Jia leisurely dusted his hands and looked at Nicole, "Alright, from now on, your siblings are free and safe. Hehe...I suggest you send them to either the mage or warrior academies in Kaya Empire. That way."

"No!" Nicole's eyes flashed as she loftily declared, "If the children in my family want to train their battle skills, they don't need to study outside of our home. Our family naturally provides training to learn the most powerful battle skills!"

"Pa!" Suo Jia slapped his forehead and laughed, "That's right, how could I forget that? Your influential family has produced 10 Legendary ranked heroes, and even one Epic ranked one. Your family's battle skills must be peak grade, why would your family bother learning the things that everyone knows?"

Suo Jia seemed to have just thought of something, and he asked Nicole in a puzzled tone, "But speaking of this, there's something I don't understand; if your family's so powerful, how do you keep getting caught?"

Nicole's attractive face flushed as she said in embarrassment, "That's because I'm still too inexperienced. With my current strength, I actually shouldn't be going out to steal from such dangerous places. But for the sake of my siblings, I didn't have any choice except to take the risk."

Suo Jia nodded in understanding. It wasn't that Nicole was weak, but she was only in her teens after all. Although she was powerful, she hadn't reached the point of being unrivaled yet. While it didn't matter if she went to common places, she was still on the inexperienced side with respect to locations like the city lord's residence.

Nicole eventually calmed down and continued, "In addition, my family's greatest might lies in Absolute Concealment. Our stealth can be maintained over 10x longer than any other stealth technique, and...once we enter the stealth state, we're pretty much impossible to detect. Most notably, our speed while in this stealth state doesn't decrease at all."

"God!" Suo Jia felt chills run down the back of his neck. No wonder Nicole's family had produced an Epic ranked hero; this Absolute Concealment was too overpowered, even more amazing than the Concealment Ring's effects! The Concealment Ring could only maintain the stealth state for 12 seconds, but Nicole's family's Absolute Concealment could maintain stealth for dozens of minutes! And this was only the beginning level; once the advanced levels were reached, one could probably stay concealed for up to an entire day!

Seeing Suo Jia's astonished expression, Nicole proudly continued, "Moreover, aside from our stealth, our family's Instant Kill has improved in might by severalfold after being adjusted by our ancestors. If you understand how the thief realm works, you must've heard of the Instant Kill – Revised before; that's a battle technique passed down my family!

“Gulp...” Suo Jia swallowed with some difficulty, and felt goosebumps rise from his skin. Instant Kill – Revised was definitely a super battle skill. Even though Suo Jia didn’t know much about the thief realm, he’d heard of this renowned battle skill multiple times already.

“Hehe...” Nicole’s brother proudly declared, “Our family is just like that. If we were to fight head-on, we probably wouldn’t even be able to defeat an average warrior. But...once we enter our concealed state, the entire world becomes our hunting grounds!”

“Mhmmm....” Suo Jia furiously nodded. If one raised their guards, both the Instant Kill and the Instant Kill – Revised were nothing to be afraid of. What was frightening was being attacked from the darkness while caught unawares. That meant being basically defenseless.

Thinking about it, how could one possibly defend against a concealed enemy that secretly hid by one’s side without the person knowing? The moment one relaxed, the enemy would use the Instant Kill. Even if one wore an unrivaled armor, who would wear it for every moment of their life?

Instant Kill wasn’t actually that big of a deal, just an attack that was two times faster than a normal attack. With its gale-like speed, its penetrative ability couldn’t possibly be lacking either; it was even able to pierce through a steel armor. However, Instant Kill was useless under normal circumstances. If one faced their enemy head-on, it wouldn’t matter how fast Instant Kill was, it couldn’t possibly be faster than the other person’s weapons. While the

enemy might be unable to dodge, their weapons could still block the attack.

When facing an enemy head-on, the opponent could easily use a weapon to deflect the dagger. While Instant Kill was bizarrely fast, its strength wasn't comparable. This was why Nicole's family was on the weaker side in terms of their strength with respect to fighting opponents face to face.

But once one entered the concealed state, it was impossible for the opponent to determine where the person's attacks were coming from. Oftentimes, the opponent didn't realize what was going on until after their backs had been pierced by one's dagger. Only then would the opponent realize where one was.

Instant Kill's profound essence lied in the fact that it was impossible to defend against. With its matchless speed, it could quickly pierce through one's vitals, thus killing in a single blow.

Of course, Instant Kill wasn't unparalleled either. Once it was activated, there were bound to be energy fluctuations. If the enemy's strength was high enough, or their speeds fast enough, they could still block the attack last minute. It was also possible for the enemy to use a shield to block it directly, but someone faster and able to face off a thief's Instant Kill had to be stronger than the thief by severalfold.

This was Instant Kill. On the other hand, Instant Kill – Revised was the result of altering the technique with Instant Kill as a base. It used special footwork and movements to quickly advance in attack! Instant Kill was 2x faster than a normal attack, while also

being 2x more damaging. On the other hand, Instant Kill Revised was 3x each.

The thief occupation was originally the most superior in terms of speed. With the addition of Absolute Concealment, as well as Instant Kill – Revised, the thief became beyond terrifying. It was said that...long ago, no target of Nicole's family had ever been able to escape their fate of being assassinated. The combination of a 10 minute long Absolute Concealment and Instant Kill Revised could only result in a true one hit kill! This single strike was impossible to survive.

It was a shame that Nicole's parents didn't like military force or wealth. Instead, they were more obsessed with influence. Otherwise, with such formidable abilities, there was no way they'd ever fear anyone; rather, everyone would fear them instead!

Suo Jia sighed in admiration and shook his head. He looked at Nicole and recalled how that day, before Dawn City, Nicole had managed to burst outwards and pierce his stomach despite being surrounded by the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. If he hadn't been wearing the skin-tight Monarch Armor, he would've turned into a corpse back then.

He hadn't paid much attention to it in the past, but now that he reflected on it, it was really too terrifying. First, Nicole had to have torn apart the corpses on top of her, then she had to exert strength to leap up off the ground, and cover a 5 meter distance to stab Suo Jia. Even after all this had happened, Suo Jia hadn't been able to react. It had really been too fast.

Suo Jia was only a mage, so he couldn't possibly compare to a thief in speed. But back then, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had been surrounding Suo Jia, yet even their speeds weren't enough to block the attack in time. This showed just how ridiculous Nicole's attack speed had been!

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Some really long and pointless Author's Note...tl;dr, the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes at some point left the Fourth Prince and are currently searching for Suo Jia on the Greater Trade Routes, because after writing so much about them, how could they just disappear?

Chapter 267: Deviant Evolution (Part 1)

That afternoon, Suo Jia brought Nicole, her two younger sisters, and her younger brother out of Endless Clouds City. Suo Jia knew from what Nicole had told him that Nicole's family had a training base. During the past 10 years, Nicole would annually train there for half a year, and would spend the other half wandering around outside to earn money.

The group of people were escorted back to Emerald City, where Suo Jia had met Nicole the second time. If Nicole hadn't bumped into Suo Jia because she was stealing money, today's events probably would've never happened.

Nicole led the group to a manor outside Emerald City. This was where her family's special training grounds was. There were all kinds of equipment and weapons inside. No place could be more suitable to be Nicole's family's training area for the children.

Although Suo Jia really wanted to continue onwards, he really wasn't an unreasonable person. Nicole's siblings had just been reunited, shouldn't he let the group have some time together? In addition...Nicole needed some time as well to make proper arrangements for her siblings. Suo Jia knew that after entering the Greater Trade Routes, Nicole had the possibility of never returning again. If he wasn't comfortable with letting her leave properly, then how would she wholeheartedly join him through the Greater Trade Routes?

In order to tighten the siblings' relationship, Suo Jia didn't disturb them. He found an empty room in the manor, and began to

practice training by himself. If he wanted to leave for the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia's power still wasn't enough at all.

During the following several days, Suo Jia followed his own daily routine. But he soon discovered something was off; the time he'd used previously for Enchanted Zhiyao was now empty. Although he could train in other things, this wasn't necessarily the most appropriate thing to do.

After contemplating this for a long while, Suo Jia finally prepared to redraw up his plans. Although he could no longer continue consuming the potions, he could still perform the Enchanted Zhiyao process. While potion usage had detrimental effects, the manufacture process itself didn't. Either way, it'd allow his spirit power and magic power rise crazily. Why waste such an amazing training technique?

Suo Jia opened his interspatial ring and fished out the alchemy furnace, then a high quality Ice Soul he'd requested from the dwarves to use as a cooling medium. With this, he was prepared to start the Enchanted Zhiyao again.

Most likely because it had sensed the energy from the Ice Soul, the 2 meter tall Frost Wyrms suddenly leapt out of the ring before it had been closed. It greedily looked at the high quality Ice Soul, looking as if it wanted to swallow it in a single gulp.

Suo Jia couldn't help but wryly laugh at the sight. This Ice Soul wasn't a crystal core from a magical beast, but something dug up from a 10,000 year old glacier. It was a core made of old, condensed black ice, a rare material the dwarves used to forge. If Suo Jia

hadn't handed over Life Potions, he would've never been able to obtain this Ice Soul.

Suo Jia looked at the Frost Wurm with a bitter smile. He found it unfathomable that it even wanted to eat a stone. This thing wasn't a crystal core, would the dragon even be able to digest it?

Suo Jia reached out his hand and said sternly, "Let me warn you, you cannot eat this Ice Soul. If you want to eat, I'll give you some ice elemental magic crystals later. Without this treasure, I can't perform the Enchanted Zhiyao."

Seemingly understanding Suo Jia's words, the little Frost Wurm begrudgingly laid down on the ground next to Suo Jia. But its eyes were still firmly locked onto the Ice Soul that was emitting a frosty air.

Suo Jia patted the little Frost Wurm's head. This guy didn't seem very different from a large dog at this point; it was just a bit fatter, and had wings.

Suo Jia shook his head and gathered his concentration to begin the Enchanted Zhiyao. Just as before, he created Spirit Potions, Magic Potions, and Endurance Potions, producing over a hundred bottles at once. Only then did Suo Jia stop in satisfaction.

Suo Jia stretched his arms and pondered for a bit. He no longer remembered how many potions he'd made since he'd first learned the Enchanted Zhiyao. However, he could say with certainty that his alchemy skill was one that he'd brought to the point of

perfection.

Although Suo Jia had already mastered the skill for creating the three major potions, this wasn't the end, but rather, the beginning. Suo Jia would have to create refined potions next.

The refined potions were still the same as the three major potions, but...the previous potions weren't pure. A bottle of potion contained limited energy. The refined potions that Suo Jia needed to make now were different though. In the same amount of potion, the amount of energy that could be replenished would be much more. In addition, practicing the refined potions would also increase the energy in the normal potions.

Suo Jia suddenly heard a sound come from next to him. Puzzled, he turned around to look, and saw that the little Frost Wyrms that had been sprawled across the ground the whole time were trying to take advantage of the moment that Suo Jia hadn't been paying attention, and tried to secretly eat the Ice Soul.

When Suo Jia saw the Ice Soul was just about to enter the little Frost Wyrms' large mouth, he hurriedly raised his hand to shoot out an Ice Arrow accurately at the Ice Soul on the alchemy furnace. In that critical moment, Suo Jia managed to save the treasure from the jaws of the little Frost Wyrms.

"Crunch..." The little Frost Wyrms hadn't been able to get the Ice Soul, but instead chomped down on the potion that Suo Jia had just made and hadn't had the time to put away. Just like that, the little Frost Wyrms swallowed a dozen bottles.

At that moment...the little Frost Wyrms hadn't yet realized that it hadn't gotten the Ice Soul. Thinking that the Ice Soul was in its mouth, it contently closed its eyes and took a large gulp. But after swallowing a few times, the little Frost Wyrms finally discovered that Suo Jia was picking up the Ice Soul from the corner. It was clear to see that...it had missed.

Eyeing the Ice Soul in Suo Jia's hand, the little Frost Wyrms hurriedly swallowed a few more times, dumping all the potions down into its stomach before preparing to lunge and forcibly take the Ice Soul from Suo Jia's hand. But just then, a strange feeling arose from the dragon's body.

The little Frost Wyrms suddenly felt a refreshing, relieving feeling, and it closed its eyes in contentment. Under the stimulation of the Spirit Potions, the dragon suddenly grew dizzy, which felt both peculiar yet wonderful, an indescribable feeling.

That wasn't all. The Magic Potions and Endurance Potions also made the little Frost Wyrms' entire body feel relaxed and full of energy. In addition to the light, floating feeling it felt, the stimulation was even greater than one that a female Frost Wyrms could give it. This was the first time it had ever felt so comfortable in its entire life; in contrast, it no longer even cared for the Ice Soul.

The dragon tightly shut its eyes, concentrating on enjoying that indescribably amazing feeling. After a long while, that light, floating feeling gradually faded, and the little Frost Wyrms couldn't help but open its eyes in disappointment.

At almost the same time it opened its eyes, the little Frost Wyrml happily noticed the scattered potions strewn across the ground. Its eyes flashed, and it suddenly lunged forwards, its red tongue flicking outwards to quickly shove a dozen potions into its mouth. With a loud crunch, the little Frost Wyrml contently closed its eyes as that light feeling arose from within him once more.

“What the....” Suo Jia cried out when he saw the little Frost Wyrml’s strange movements. What was wrong with it? Eating magic crystals was fine, but it even wanted to eat rocks, and now, look at that...his little pet had begun to eat the magic potions too.

Chapter 268: Deviant Evolution (Part 2)

Under Suo Jia's astonished gaze, the little Frost Wurm opened its eyes after a while. The dozen magic potions it'd taken from the ground had already been swallowed down into his stomach, which it had closed its eyes to enjoy. Seeing the dragon's light-headed, swaying manner, Suo Jia couldn't help but laugh.

In order to make sure that the little pet wouldn't make any more trouble, Suo Jia just took out all the potions in his interspatial ring, and piled them up in the room instead. Then, with the alchemy furnace in hand, he hid outside a corner and began to make refined potions.

This was indeed a useful trick. After seeing so many potions at once, the little Frost Wurm completely ignored the Ice Soul. It would just laze around in the room every day, swallowing those potions one after another, and closing its eyes in contentment. Like this, it didn't bother Suo Jia at all for an entire month, all the way until the potions were all gone. Only then did it anxiously run to Suo Jia's side and pull at Suo Jia's robes hard with its mouth. It was clear to see that it definitely still wanted to eat.

Seeing the little dragon incessantly tug at his pants legs, Suo Jia picked up one of the refined potions and tossed it at the little Frost Wurm. Either way, these things had quite large negative effects. He only needed to keep some prepared for any unexpected measures, and he could give the extras to the dragon to eat.

The refined potions were different from normal potions. Normal potions typically used up 20% magic power and spirit power to

create various types of potions with different effects based on different proportions. The higher one's magic power and spirit power were, the more magic power and spirit power would be replenished.

Of course, the amount of energy the normal potions could replenish wasn't limitless. After a certain point, it would reach a cap. With Suo Jia's current state, using up all his magic power and spirit power could produce several thousands of potions, as creating one took even less than 1%, not 20%. It probably used up closer to 1/1000. Obviously...this was also because Suo Jia's magic power was too frightening. If it were any other mage, managing to create 100 bottles of potions in one go was already brag worthy.

But these refined potions were different. Each bottle of potion required constant compression of one's magic power to refine, extract, and purify the most concentrated potion in order to surmount the limiting barrier of replenishing effects. However, creating this potion also required much more time.

Since he'd just made refined potions, Suo Jia could only make 20-30 or so within an hour. Even if he managed to get better at it in the future, he wouldn't be able to go past 60 bottles in one hour. The refined potion had a set manufacturing process. No matter how fast one was, it still required that amount of time.

However, although the refined potions required longer to create, it also improved one's magic and spirit power at an even higher rate.

The compression, refinement, and extraction of the magic power

was a method that only an Advanced Mage could train in. By means of the Enchanted Zhiyao, Suo Jia's magic power and spirit power had wildly shot up, but unfortunately...his affinity with magic and comprehension of the elements were aspects he still needed to work on. This was something that couldn't possibly occur through Enchanted Zhiyao.

Right now, Suo Jia would spend 6 hours every day in Enchanted Zhiyao. Although this could only crazily raise his magic power and spirit power, and not his affinity or understanding, Suo Jia discovered another benefit to to his delight.

No matter if one was compressing, refining, or extracting the magical elements, it was controlled by water. With the production of the refined potions, Suo Jia's water manipulation had suddenly broken through a bottleneck that he'd been stuck at for a long time, and began to rise once more. Moreover, his improvement speed was abnormally rapid.

In reality, Suo Jia's current strength was just that of a typical Great Mage, with the exact same level of might. The only difference was that Suo Jia's magic power and spirit power were extremely abnormal; when the opposite party's powers had long since been exhausted, Suo Jia's would still be full.

If he wanted to improve the might of his magic further, then he couldn't just raise his mastery of magic, but improve his affinity and comprehension with the elements. Suo Jia had never considered this aspect much before, after all...Suo Jia always prioritized his control of the ice stream over his magic attack.

Only the strongest people were best at covering their weaknesses. This was what Suo Jia believed in. As a mage, his weakness was close combat, but his control over the ice stream just happened to resolve this issue. There were many critical moments that Suo Jia had survived through by relying on his ice stream to go against his enemies, not with magic.

Of course, Suo Jia didn't only practice his ice stream. Since he had already grasped magic, combining his control over the ice stream and his magic together would be perfect. Suo Jia had already sketched out a grand blueprint; now he needed to slowly turn it into reality one step at a time.

“Wu...wu...” A low humming sound could be heard, and Suo Jia sensed something pulling at his pant leg again. He furrowed his brows and turned around to look at his side; he knew that it was definitely the little dragon wanting to eat more potions.

While still deep in his thoughts, Suo Jia grabbed a batch of potions once more, and turned around to toss them into the little Frost Wurm's mouth. However, the instant he turned around, Suo Jia's jaw dropped open, and he could only stare at the Frost Wurm in shock.

The little Frost Wurm was no longer how it had been a few days ago. Its fat and tall body had begun to shrivel up. What shocked Suo Jia the most was that the dragon's pale blue skin had gradually turned lighter.

Only a few days had passed without Suo Jia noticing, but the little dragon's body had already shrunk from a height of 2 meters

to a height of 1.5 meters. Its body had also slimmed down a lot, and its pale blue skin had turned a faint silvery blue, making its entire body look almost transparent.

A long time ago, Suo Jia had carefully researched about the Great Frost Wurm. He was certain that no matter when, the Great Frost Wurm should never be in such a shape. Without question, this guy was a deviation.

According to typical growth patterns, the Great Frost Wurm's body was supposed to continue growing larger. At a certain size, it would officially enter the long term period. But at the moment, the little pet had not only stopped growing larger, but had even shrunk in size. This was too abnormal. Suo Jia had never seen records of this in any of the materials he'd read.

Suo Jia looked over the Frost Wurm cautiously, and began to contemplate the issue. Soon...Suo Jia had roughly figured out where the root of the problem was. Everything was the refined potions' fault.

Originally, the concentration of the little Frost Wurm's inner magic power and spirit power had been around the same as Suo Jia's. Most of its magic power had been stored up in the form of fat, which was why the little Frost Wurm had grown larger and fatter so quickly. After reaching a certain point, it finally stabilized, and began to learn how to compress, refine, and extract the magic power and spirit power it possessed.

But now, after drinking too many refined potions, the dragon's spirit power and magic power concentrations had been raised. The

refined potion had been like a glass of saltwater dumped into a glass of freshwater, quickly increasing the concentration of it to another level.

At Suo Jia's current level, he could compress, refine, extract, and concentrate so that its purity would double. It was precisely due to this reason that all the magic power-storing fat in the little Frost Wurm's body had quickly dissolved. Its inner magic power and spirit power had been extremely concentrated this whole time. In some sense, this little pet had already become a refined Great Frost Wurm.

Suo Jia frowned. Strictly speaking, he didn't know whether this was a good or bad thing yet. But after considering it for a while, he decided that it was more likely that it was a good thing, so there was no reason not to give it more potions. Thus, Suo Jia tossed all the refined potions in his hand into the little pet's mouth.

The Great Frost Wurm was an elemental creature, originally formed by the condensing of the ice elements. Activating magic was just one ability it had; without magic affinity and understanding, there was no need for one to nurture its affinity with it.

Like this, human and dragon spent every day in that room. Suo Jia would create potions, while the little Frost Wurm would eat them. After three months, their relationship had already become unimaginably close. The little dragon was no longer willing to return to the interspatial ring, and would commonly wrap itself around Suo Jia, hoping for Suo Jia to grant it a favor and award it magic potions to eat to its content.

Finally, after Nicole had finally finished arranging everything, half a year had already passed. During this time, Suo Jia's magic power had suddenly flew up. However, because he had focused all his concentration on the Enchanted Zhiyao and absorbing knowledge from meditation, Suo Jia hadn't yet broken through to the Magic Scholar realm.

However, Suo Jia was still pretty satisfied with his diligent closed-door training this past half a year. His increase in powers had risen astronomically to almost twice what it had been before. At the same time, his control over the water elements had reached a peak, but was still rising to a ridiculous realm.

However, within this half a year, the greatest changes hadn't been from Suo Jia, but the little Frost Wyrms that just ate all day. When Suo Jia looked at the pleased little pet currently wrapped around him, he really couldn't connect it with the little pet from half a year ago.

Chapter 269: Might Of The Diamond Dragon (Part 1)

The Frost Wyrms that had been 2 meters tall half a year ago were now even less than 1 meter tall. Its body had also slimmed down a lot. When it wrapped itself around Suo Jia or ran about playfully, it really didn't seem any different from a small dog.

Not only had its body shrunk, the little Frost Wyrms' body had more importantly become completely transparent. One could very clearly see their hand on the other side of its body. Currently, the little pet's body seemed to just be a heap of skin, with a blue glow that seemed to constantly flow throughout its body.

Faced with the little Frost Wyrms' current state, even Suo Jia couldn't tell if it had advanced or regressed. Its body had become so much smaller and thinner, so Suo Jia couldn't tell how strong it was now. He bitterly smiled at the little dragon; there was probably nobody in the world that would be able to recognize it now. The Great Frost Wyrms were never supposed to have such an appearance.

The door opened, and Nicole excitedly strode in. As soon as she entered, she stated, "Young Master Suo Jia, I've already arranged all my family matters. We can head out now."

"What?" After waiting for so long, Suo Jia had almost forgotten his own goal. After suddenly hearing Nicole say that they could head out, Suo Jia unexpectedly felt unwilling to leave.

Suo Jia furiously shook his head. He knew that after living the easy and comfortable life, it was always hard to avoid laziness. This wouldn't do; once a person grew lazy, they'd be easily prone to become garbage, and never be able to reach the highest realm.

After storing away a large amount of money, Suo Jia and Nicole left Emerald City together, and began to head towards the Greater Trade Routes. As soon as they had left the city and seen the verdant plains of the countryside, Suo Jia couldn't help but grow excited. This time...with Nicole as his guide, he believed that they'd be able to smoothly reach the Greater Trade Routes.

After rushing along the path for over a month, Suo Jia and Nicole finally reached the border area of Kaya Empire. The reason it was called an area was because there wasn't really a clear division line. The only thing between two countries was a large plain: Magical Beast Plains.

Suo Jia furrowed his brows at the sight of the waist-high grass in the distance. Passing through the grass was easy, as there was a road through the plain that led to Kaya's neighboring empire. However...Magical Beast Plains wasn't exactly peaceful and safe. One could be secretly attacked by magical beasts jumping out from the tall grass. Without some skills, there was no way a person would be able to pass through this area.

However, since his target was the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia naturally couldn't be deterred by the difficulty of passing through these plains. Although this place was dangerous, it wasn't extremely so. Suo Jia knew that if he couldn't even pass through here, he couldn't even consider the Greater Trade Routes. If one

was unable to pass over a ditch, how could they imagine leaping over a river?

Suo Jia took a deep breath and entered the path first. Nicole didn't dare fall behind, and hurriedly ran behind him, staying by Suo Jia's side at all times. Their objective was the Greater Trade Routes straight ahead.

The first dozen kilometers were completely peaceful. A breeze blew through, and the plains were still. Strolling through such beautiful plains in such clear weather was actually a very amazing matter.

“Swish...” However, Magical Beast Plains' dangers weren't just empty words. Not long after they continued to walk, a few whooshing sounds rang out, and dozens of golden grassland lions jumped out from the grass on the roadside, fiercely blocking the path.

Having sensed the sudden change, Suo Jia didn't waste any time, and hurriedly prepared himself for battle. When he inspected his surroundings more closely, he discovered that there were 5 lions in front of him, 6 behind, blocking off Suo Jia in the middle.

Suo Jia didn't know much about these golden grassland lions, but he could vaguely tell that these were extremely violent animals that couldn't really be provoked. As he was silently worrying about this, Nicole's voice solemnly rang out, “Suo Jia, these are Golden Wind Lions. There are a total of 5 male ones and 5 female ones, as well as a Golden Wind Lion King. This looks like trouble; once the situation turns bad, we should immediately retreat.”

“Golden Wind Lion King.” Suo Jia recited in confusion.

“Yea...” Nicole gravely nodded and said in concern, “The Golden Wind Lion is an extremely powerful wind-type magical beast famous for speed. A normal Golden Wind Lion counts as a middle ranked magical beast, but the Golden Wind Lion King qualifies as a high ranked magical beast. It isn’t something we can go against right now.”

“That...” Suo Jia took a deep breath, and also grew more cautious. Suo Jia didn’t really mind middle ranked magical beasts, but if it was a high ranked magical beast, even Suo Jia couldn’t possibly win.

After a while, Suo Jia firmly replied, “Nicole, immediately enter the stealth state, and be prepared to use Instant Kill. As long as we exterminate the Golden Wind Lion King, it’ll be our victory.”

“Ah?!” Nicole cried out in astonishment, “Are you crazy? We can’t possibly win against the Golden Wind Lion, it’s too fast. Moreover, they’re proficient in group wind magics, which isn’t something we can go up against. In my opinion...it’s best if we just retreat...”

“Hmph.” Before Nicole had finished speaking, Suo Jia coldly snorted, “I know it’s very formidable, but if we can’t even beat that, do you think there’s any point in heading towards the Greater Trade Routes?”

“That...” Nicole struggled to respond to Suo Jia’s question. Although she knew that Suo Jia’s words made sense, she still couldn’t agree to Suo Jia’s suicidal risk.

After hesitating for a while, Nicole clenched her teeth and ground out, “Fine. Since you saved my siblings, my life is sold to you. If you’ve already made your decision, I’ll accompany you with all of my support, no matter what.” Then, Nicole’s body flashed, and she mysteriously disappeared from her spot.

Suo Jia stared blankly at where Nicole had disappeared for a moment, then loudly said, “Nicole, don’t worry, I’m not an idiot either. If we really cannot stand our ground, I won’t just dumbly court death. However...it’s impossible for me to run without a fight. Let’s work hard, we’ll win.”

Suo Jia turned around and said to the little pet, “Ok, the battle’s about to begin. It’s best if you hurry back into the interspatial ring. These enemies are too powerful, they aren’t opponents you can defeat.”

In response to Suo Jia’s commands, the little pet’s eyes flashed brightly, and it instead disobeyed his command. At the moment... the little Frost Wyrms already had the intelligence of a 7-8 year old child. In its opinion, Suo Jia was the best person in the world, as well as its cherished master. If anything happened to Suo Jia, who would give it good things to eat?

The little Frost Wyrms angrily turned around to glare at the Golden Wind Lion King. In terms of abilities, the dragon knew that this great lion was the most powerful amongst the enemies. This

group of lions had been led here by that lion king.

“Grumble...” The little Frost Wyrmling crouched down slightly and a low, intimidating growl came from its throat. Anything that wanted to harm its master would have to pass through him first. Although the little pet wasn’t confident it could defeat this lion, it had to at least deter the lion. The dragon knew its master’s level of strength very well. Although its master wasn’t at the level of being this great lion’s opponent, the master could definitely go up against the other, smaller lions.

The little Frost Wyrmling’s body suddenly stretched forwards, and it raised its head towards the sky, emitting out a string of melodious cries. At the same time, a sparkling and translucent Glacial Armor began to condense over its body layer by layer.

“Holy crap.” Suo Jia cried out strangely at the scene. He watched as the dragon’s small, dog-sized body was quickly covered by a large amount of ice, and its body quickly swelled up like a balloon.

In that instant, a 4 meter tall, incomparably thick and solid ice dragon unyieldingly stood in front of Suo Jia. Not only was it firmly protecting Suo Jia behind its body, it had also sturdily blocked off the entire pathway through the plains.

Suo Jia stared up at the 4 meter tall ice dragon with a dumbstruck expression, his mind having completely short-circuited. What the heck was this? This...this looked like a giant dragon formed by a pile of diamonds. That’s right...aside from its size, this was clearly a shrunken Diamond Dragon.

Suo Jia looked over at the Diamond Dragon's chest area. He knew that the little pet must be hiding there. However, the little guy was originally transparent; with the addition of such thick Glacial Armor, there was no way of actually finding it.

The Diamond Dragon finally began to move. It advanced forwards with powerful steps, its large body swaying from side to side as it closed in on the opposing Golden Wind Lion King and the other lions.

Seeing this, Suo Jia was suddenly aroused from his thoughts. Now wasn't the time to be in a daze. If he didn't take advantage of the Diamond Dragon blocking the Golden Wind Lion King and the other lions to eliminate the lions behind him, the lions would all attack together in a pincer attack. Then Suo Jia would definitely be forced to flee in defeat.

Suo Jia quickly turned around. With a wave of his hand, he instantly shot out a Mysterious Ice Arrow, which shot towards the leading lion behind him. With a flash of blue light, the prologue of the great battle had finally begun to unfold.

Chapter 270: Might Of The Diamond Dragon (Part 2)

Faced against Suo Jia's attack, the Golden Wind Lion opposite him lightly flashed, and successfully dodged the Mysterious Ice Arrow. After all...the Golden Wind Lion was a wind elemental magical beast. Beating them in speed was clearly giving oneself the short end of the stick. Even if one could win like that, it was by far the stupidest possible method.

Suo Jia leapt up high into the sky. With the activation of Unrivalled Wave Walking, he hung in midair. With a wave of his right hand, he instantly activated an Ice Roar, and countless lightning-fast ice blades burst out towards the other lions opposite him.

The Ice Roar actually used a single point as its origin, and would wildly send sharp ice blades spiraling outwards. Its effective attack range, the number of ice blades, and the cutting intensity of these blades all increased with the user's magic power and spirit power.

With a vicious shriek, hundreds of ice blades spun out. They were so densely packed together that even the speed-type Golden Wind Lions couldn't possibly evade them all. It wasn't that Suo Jia was precise; actually, he was simply wildly shooting everywhere. But just like that, he could hit his targets.

However, a single Ice Roar was clearly not enough to easily eliminate these Golden Wind Lions. If they were so easy to deal with, they couldn't possibly be that well known. After the Ice Roar had passed, countless cuts had appeared on these lions' bodies, but

not a single one had received a fatal attack.

It was common knowledge that injured beasts were the most frightening. Stimulated by the musky smell of blood, the Golden Wind Lions frenzily leapt forwards. Their feet fiercely pushed off the ground, propelling them up into the air as they lunged towards Suo Jia in attack.

Lions were creatures with the most exquisite strategy and tactics. While hunting, they paid particular attention to formations and position. Once they initiated their attack, there was no way any creature would be able to easily flee.

Seeing the Golden Wind Lions jumping into the air, Suo Jia couldn't help but inwardly gasp in praise. These five lions charged over from five different directions, forming the vague shape of a large net. No matter how Suo Jia tried to evade, there was no way he could completely dodge. He'd definitely end up suffering from at least two of the attacks.

Of course, Suo Jia could also rise up higher, but it was clearly too late now. While the five Golden Wind Lions were jumping into the air, they opened their mouths, and five whirling wind blades tightly blocked off any space for Suo Jia to dodge. The air above was particularly impossible to escape through.

If it were anyone else encountering this kind of scene, they'd definitely be powerless. But Suo Jia was different; against these pouncing Golden Wind Lions, Suo Jia didn't bother trying to dodge at all. His right foot stomped down, and Diamond Charge instantly burst outwards.

Although the assault was fierce, the five Golden Wind Lions were still in midair, so they had no way of gathering power. With the impetus from Diamond Charge, they all miserably tumbled down from the air, and their first wave of attack failed just like that.

Suo Jia inwardly judged the fallen Golden Wind Lions as a fluke. If these guys had been on the ground, Suo Jia's Diamond Charge might really have been unable to force them all back. It was precisely because of this that Suo Jia had cautiously risen into the air. Only there would his Diamond Charge truly be unrivaled.

Suo Jia didn't dare waste any time. His left hand waved, and a nine meter long ice whip snaked out of Suo Jia's hand. He swung his left hand once more, and instantly....the long ice whip shot out towards the five Golden Wind Lions crawling up from the ground with a fierce shriek.

After half a year of Refined Enchanted Zhiyao, Suo Jia's control over the water elements had already reached a terrifying realm. The long ice whip seemed to surge outwards like a living creature. Under powerful manipulation and the push of strong spirit power, the ice stream whip's lashes grew sharper and sharper. Each time the whip lashed onto the ground, a deep scar would instantly be embedded.

Although the Golden Wind Lions were very fast, they were only swift when moving in a straight line. If they had to twist and turn, the wind elements were incomparable to the water elements, like how a bird could never be as agile as a fish.

After analyzing the Golden Wind Lions' forward trajectories, Suo Jia's crystalline, ice whip welcomed them with a forward lash. In an instant, the five lions were tangled up into the whip, and any of them that tried to break away were fiercely pulled back.

Of course, Suo Jia's attack wasn't only this. When the ice stream whip struck the Golden Wind Lions, they'd be simultaneously affected by the Freezing Touch. Although the ice would quickly be broken by the Golden Wind Lions, this constantly shaved away at their energy. As this decreased, their speeds also slowed. This was Suo Jia's chance.

Finally, after five minutes were up, Suo Jia's right hand pushed out. A blue light flashed, and a sharp Mysterious Ice Arrow instantly shot towards one of the Golden Wind Lion's right eye. The penetrating point pierced through the lion's back. At the same time, its entire head was completely frozen into a block of ice, and the lion couldn't be any more dead.

"Bang." With a dull sound, the Golden Wind Lion miserably toppled to the ground. Without the commands of its brain, no animal could possibly continue moving. As it collapsed, its already frozen head shattered into tiny pieces.

With this lion's fall, the battle situation was set. The five lions together hadn't been able to do anything to Suo Jia before; now that there were only 4 left, it was even less possible. Within 10 seconds, Suo Jia consecutively activated four arrows, and shot all of the remaining lions dead.

The Mysterious Ice Arrow was the magic that Suo Jia used the

most often. At the same time...it was also a single target ice attack. It was the magic that had the highest amount of damage. Using the Mysterious Ice Arrow to end the battle was the most appropriate, most reasonable choice.

After that side's battle had ended, Suo Jia didn't rest. He quickly turned around, and looked behind him. There...the Diamond Dragon and the Golden Wind Lion King's fight had entered a white-hot state.

Without a question, the current Diamond Dragon was far from being the Golden Wind Lion King's opponent. It was simply being beaten up; it couldn't possibly go against the Golden Wind Lion King's rising might. But despite this, the Diamond Dragon had still successfully managed to pin the Golden Wind Lion King back down, dragging it along the ground.

Although the Diamond Dragon wasn't the Golden Wind Lion King's rival, the Golden Wind Lion King was probably still extremely depressed. While it far surpassed the Diamond Dragon in strength, the Diamond Dragon had a ridiculously overpowered defense. Thus, it couldn't really be harmed.

“ROAR!” A world-shaking roar rang out from the Golden Wind Lion King's great mouth. Immediately...violent, Ice Roar-level wind blades instantly formed. Hundreds of these blades combined together to form a wind blade net, completely wrapping around the large Diamond Dragon.

“Screech...” Each wind blade slashed towards the Diamond Dragon with crisp, compressed sounds. Deep gouges began to form

on the surface of the Diamond Dragon's body. However...this was the only effect. Although it looked like it was heavily injured, Suo Jia knew very well that the Diamond Dragon was currently hiding deep within the Glacial Armor's layers, and hadn't been injured at all.

Although the water element couldn't trump the wind element, everyone knew that while the wind elemental magics were mainly fast, cutting, and piercing, they lacked impact force. It was like thin blade pieces momentarily cutting one's body; one couldn't really feel any impetus behind these.

It was exactly due to this reason that while broken ice slashes were dancing around in the air, the Diamond Dragon hidden deep within the Glacial Armor was completely unharmed; it had barely even shaken.

Suo Jia watched as a white mist began to flow around the Diamond Dragon's body, and the deep gouges that had been carved out were quickly repaired until it looked like they had never been attacked. The Golden Wind Lion King's attacks had clearly been wasted.

Seeing the Diamond Dragon's clumsy attacks towards the Golden Wind Lion King and complete ignoring the opposite party's attacks, Suo Jia could only stand there stunned for a moment. Then he raised his head up towards the air and began to laugh out loud. This fellow was really too overpowered. With the protection of such thick Glacial Armor, it seemed to completely overlook the enemy's attacks. It was a pity that the Diamond Dragon's movements were so awkward and slow. Injuring the Golden Wind

Lion King was a completely impossible task.

Chapter 271: Great Frost Wyrms (Part 1)

In reality, the current Diamond Dragon couldn't even defeat a normal Golden Wind Lion, let alone the Golden Wind Lion King. If Suo Jia's Mysterious Ice Arrow couldn't even harm the Golden Wind Lion, how could the cumbersome Diamond Dragon land an attack?

Of course, while the Diamond Dragon was very stupid and slow, becoming a true Thousand Year Dragon was completely different. It would be several dozen meters tall, standing there like a small mountain, and its normal attacks would be ultimate level ice magics. Any magic attack it activated was a forbidden spell, without exception.

The Thousand Year Dragon actually didn't rely on speed to fight its opponents. With its magic, it didn't matter how fast its opponent was, because its attack range measured up to 100 meters. Any magic spell it used would attack any enemy within at least 100 meters. No matter how fast they were, they wouldn't possibly be able to escape quickly enough.

For example, the Diamond Dragon's trademark move: Diamond Charge. The effective range of Suo Jia's Diamond Charge was only ten meters, but if a Thousand Year Great Frost Wyrms activated it, the attack range would at the very least reach a massive distance of 100 meters. A single Diamond Charge would immediately exterminate anything within its range. Its might was unimaginably great.

"Hmm. Something doesn't seem quite right." Suo Jia furrowed

his brows together. At the moment...there were only two Golden Wind Lions left fighting the Diamond Dragon, aside from the Golden Wind Lion King. Three of the Golden Wind Lions had already collapsed in pools of blood. Suo Jia just couldn't understand how the Diamond Dragon had killed these lions off.

Just then, a Golden Wind Lion suddenly leapt up from the ground. Like a flash of lightning, it covered a distance of nearly 10 meters before clamping its jaws onto the Diamond Dragon's neck area. As ice shards flew wildly into the air, the Golden Wind Lion lost its momentum, and jumped back down onto the ground.

The instant the Golden Wind Lion had turned around and dropped back onto the ground...a piercing light flashed. At the same time, blood suddenly appeared at the Golden Wind Lion's neck. By the time its body had hit the ground, it had already lost all ability to stand. A large amount of blood was furiously gushing out from its throat. Its entire body twitched as it neared its death.

"Gasp." Suo Jia couldn't help but sharply inhale at the scene. He knew that the attack just now had actually been from Nicole. That sudden attack was really too frightening. It was impossible to evade, impossible to block.

As expected, Nicole's figure appeared in midair. The dagger in her hand was still brandished, and her body flashed like lightning as she leapt up to the Diamond Dragon's shoulder. Her right foot lightly pushed off the Great Frost Wurm's body, and her body once again soared high into the air. The next moment...Nicole's body mysteriously disappeared in the air, as if she had passed through another dimension.

Suo Jia could only stare in shock at the place she'd disappeared from. The whole process of materializing, then re-entering the concealed state had only taken a span of 2-3 seconds. She'd first flown through the air for a distance, then stepped off the Diamond Dragon's shoulder, and her body had risen into the air to enter her invisible state once more. Her movements were incomparably smooth, giving any onlooker the impression that she'd become one with the air.

Suo Jia found Nicole's miserable appearance back when she'd been fighting with the people on the street completely unbelievable now. The Nicole in front of him was actually the same Nicole from back then? It was really too frightening of a thought. When Suo Jia recalled what Nicole had said, Suo Jia finally realized that her words had been absolutely correct.

When one looked at Nicole like this, any warrior would be completely confident in their ability to defeat her. She didn't look very strong. However...once she entered the concealed state, the entire world became her hunting grounds. Nobody could possibly dodge the Instant Kill from the shadows.

If she was so formidable, than why had she been defeated and captured? Actually, everyone had their own weaknesses; when Suo Jia had first bumped into Nicole on the street, it had been right after Nicole's training had finished. Her energy had been completely drained, which had made it impossible to enter the concealed state. That's why she had lost so miserably.

Nicole would always go to her secret training area in Emerald

City every year to practice, so she had definitely been training while she had been there. But once she had appeared on the streets, it was definitely her resting period. Her energy was completely exhausted, and only by taking advantage of the time needed to replenish her energy would she have the time to stroll around the street. Occasionally, she'd steal something as well. She had unfortunately been caught this time, which is what had led up to that day's events.

In reality, Nicole believed that was fate. If she had been so easy to capture, she wouldn't have survived up until that day; who knew how many times she'd have met her end before. That day was both a disaster and destiny. This was what Nicole thought of it as. In her view, Suo Jia's presence that day had been arranged by the Heavens. Their encounter was a symbol of the Heavens doting on Nicole.

As for stealing in Endless Clouds City, that was the question of both luck and strength. If her luck wasn't good enough, she'd have been discovered as soon as she'd taken away the item, which was why she could only use stealth to hide. However...stealth wasn't limitless. After all the pathways in the city lord's residence had been sealed off, Nicole could only be miserably caught after she was helplessly forced to lift her stealth. If she didn't have a certain amount of confidence, how could Nicole have rashly gone to wreak havoc in the city lord's residence?

Just then, a crimson light flashed across the last Golden Wind Lion's throat. At the same time, Nicole appeared in front of Suo Jia's vision in a strange stance. After she brushed past the Golden Wind Lion, Nicole's body quickly leaned forward, and her left, dagger-holding hand struck the ground, sending her body into

somersault, only to hide herself within empty space once more.

“Sigh...” Suo Jia wordlessly shook his head. All he felt towards Nicole’s appearing and disappearing abilities was admiration. Suo Jia knew that if Nicole deliberately tried to assassinate him, there was no way he’d be able to avoid it. The failed assassination that time on the battlefield had really been a fluke. If she had chosen to attack his throat back then instead...

Suo Jia shuddered violently. He didn’t dare think about it any further; instead, he stared intensely at the spot Nicole had disappeared from, and once again sighed in praise. It was fortunate that such a terrifying person wasn’t his enemy, and moreover, was his ally. Otherwise, he’d probably have to always sleep with one eye open.

Suo Jia shook his head, then quickly sprung back into action. It was already getting late, so it was best to hurry up and end the fight. The Diamond Dragon’s energy would be hitting empty soon. If it fell, it would be impossible for Suo Jia alone to pin the Golden Wind Lion King down.

Suo Jia circled around from behind the Diamond Dragon, and sent three consecutive Mysterious Ice Arrows flying out through a gap in the Diamond Dragon’s body. Although the Golden Wind Lion dodged all of them, its body had already lost its previous stability.

Suo Jia smirked, and waved his right hand once more to instantly activate an Ice Roar. Facing the closely packed ice blades slashing towards it, even the Golden Wind Lion King couldn’t

possibly dodge. With a flash of crimson across its body, the Golden Wind Lion King had finally gotten injured.

With a laugh, Suo Jia suddenly jumped up onto the Diamond Dragon's shoulder. He stretched his left hand out, and a long ice stream snaked out. Following Suo Jia's left arm, the over 9 meter long ice stream danced around. After storing up energy, it viciously lashed out at the Golden Wind Lion King.

Having just been hit by the Ice Roar, the Golden Wind Lion King had somewhat slowed. It was struck by that single lash, and with the activation of Freezing Touch, the Golden Wind Lion was instantly sealed within a large ice cube.

“Snap...” It was a pity that the Golden Wind Lion still couldn't be completely frozen by a Freezing Touch of this level. A clear sound rang out as the ice around the Golden Wind Lion instantly shattered into pieces. At the same time, the Golden Wind Lion King suddenly leapt up, charging at the Diamond Dragon's shoulder that Suo Jia was standing on.

Suo Jia only laughed at the Golden Wind Lion King currently lunging at him with lightning-fast speed, and he quickly leapt onto the Diamond Dragon's large head. At the same time, the crystal ice whip in his left hand swung outwards, wrapping around the approaching Golden Wind Lion King.

Against the nimble, snake-like crystal ice whip, the Golden Wind Lion King was unable to dodge, even if he wanted to. Just like other wind-type magical beasts, while it was fast, changing direction midway was too difficult. In a mere instant, the Golden

Wind Lion King's body was tightly wrapped up.

However, the Golden Wind Lion King was the king of beasts after all; a gold light covered its body, and the long ice whip fractured bit by bit. At the same time, without slowing down, the Golden Wind Lion King flashed in an arc through the air, lunging at Suo Jia.

Seeing this, Suo Jia couldn't help but frown. There were only 5 meters remaining between them, so Suo Jia dispersed the ice stream in his control and instead reached his right hand out. His palm faced the Golden Wind Lion King in mid-air, and suddenly yanked backwards. The Golden Wind Lion King let out a miserable cry as bright crimson arrows of blood frenziedly gushed out from all the wounds it had sustained from the Ice Roar.

"Plop..." Finally, the Golden Wind Lion King's body crashed into ground, unconscious and completely still. For it to dare come within 5 meters of Suo Jia while so heavily wounded was equivalent to courting death. In a mere moment, Suo Jia activated his water manipulation to force all the Golden Wind Lion King's blood to come pouring out. Without any blood, it couldn't possibly continue living.

Chapter 272: Great Frost Wyrms (Part 2)

Nicole silently revealed herself from her concealed state as she stared blankly at the collapsed Golden Wind Lion King. She had absolutely no idea how Suo Jia had killed it. It looked more like this beast had suddenly suffered from some malfunction instead.

It couldn't be said that the Golden Wind Lion King had been slow, but...by the time it had reached the 10 meter range from Suo Jia, its speed had already been greatly reduced. The moment it'd touched the 5 meter range, the Golden Wind Lion King had suddenly frozen in mid-air. At the same time, blood had poured out from all the wounds on its body, and finally...it couldn't get even one centimeter closer to Suo Jia before it had fallen the ground, completely dead.

Suo Jia couldn't help but smile at Nicole's shocked expression. With this, his heart had finally settled down a bit. Although Nicole was formidable, Suo Jia had a trick that he was skilled at. Once he mastered it, even an immortal wouldn't dare to approach within 5 meters of Suo Jia as long as they sported injuries.

So far, Suo Jia's water manipulation skill was extremely high level, and he could already control the movements of an enemy within a ten meter radius. This served as either defense or offense. Once one entered this perimeter, Suo Jia would be able to take control of all the water inside their bodies and draw it out. When the enemy lost all of their blood, they'd naturally be unable to continue living.

“Snap...snap...” Suddenly, a crackling sound could be heard as a

ton of cracks appeared all over the Great Frost Wyrms body. Afterwards...the 4 meter tall Diamond Dragon broke into chunks of ice that came thundering down onto the ground.

Amidst the messy pile of ice, a white figure quickly appeared in front of Suo Jia in a flash. It raised its head to look up at Suo Jia with a look of longing hunger, constantly flicking its tongue out to wet its lips.

Suo Jia stretched out a hand with a smile, rubbing the head of the Diamond Dragon whose head now reached his waist. Although the little pet couldn't speak, and Suo Jia didn't have a telepathic connection with it, Suo Jia knew what it wanted.

Suo Jia generously reached his hand into his pocket to fish out a set of potions, throwing them directly into the Diamond Dragon's mouth. This 'set' contained one bottle of every type of potion.

After catching the potions that Suo Jia had tossed to it, the Diamond Dragon closed his eyes in bliss as it greedily gulped the potions down. After happily swallowing, the Diamond Dragon's body suddenly began to emit a white mist.

Nicole looked at Suo Jia, then back at the small, dog-sized pet less than a meter tall. She felt that Suo Jia was incomparably mysterious; she was already unable to tell whether that Golden Wind Lion King had been killed by Suo Jia or the little pet. Moreover...what exactly was that little pet?

Nicole crouched down in front of the Diamond Dragon, carefully

examining it. This little fellow seemed very similar to a Great Frost Wyrmling in terms of outer appearance and characteristic features, but according to Nicole's memory, the Great Frost Wyrmling couldn't possibly maintain such a delicate body structure while having such formidable might.

However, it would be wrong to say that it wasn't a Great Frost Wyrmling. Putting aside its outer appearance and judging from abilities alone, there was no way any other life form so similar to the Great Frost Wyrmling existed.

After her inspection...it seemed that the little pet's body was no longer transparent. The thin, white mist had begun to brew in its crystalline, see-through body, amassing together...

Perhaps others wouldn't know what that thin white mist was, but Suo Jia obviously knew. With his understanding and comprehension of the ice elements, Suo Jia had quickly sensed that this mist was the condensation of cold air.

Suo Jia trembled as he watched the white mist appear within the Diamond Dragon. He knew that based on the previous battle alone, the Diamond Dragon had finally reached the ultimate realm of the adolescent stage, and managed to enter the long-term period.

It had been a mere eight years since Suo Jia had first received the little Frost Wyrmling. Within this short period, the little Frost Wyrmling had advanced leaps and bounds, immediately jumping over the newborn stage, adolescent stage, and entering the long-term stage. This also meant that the Diamond Dragon's current level of strength had already reached somewhere between the middle-

ranked and high-ranked magical beast's.

Suo Jia's body trembled as he stared at the little Frost Wurm. He silently speculated that most likely...it was because of the refined magic potions that the Diamond Dragon had entered the state of condensing energy early. That was why it had managed to break through to its long-term period.

Suo Jia's body involuntarily shuddered as he stared in amazement at the little Frost Wurm. According to records, the Great Frost Wurm that had entered the long-term period would theoretically have a build of over 10 meters in height, and be as thick and solid as a small mountain. Once it activated its Glacial Armor, its body would become nearly 20-30 meters in height, and be beyond sturdy. On top of this base, it would condense more energy. This would allow it to finally become the peerless Thousand Year Dragon.

Theoretically speaking, wouldn't it be this large forever? Suo Jia's expression grew uglier and uglier as he stared at the milky white-colored Diamond Dragon currently running around in joyous circles around Suo Jia like a little dog.

Suo Jia knew that from now until the boundless future, the little pet would really be a little pet. Its body's size would unfortunately never go past a meter in height. Once it activated its Glacial Armor, its size would be up to 5 meters. It would never be like a true Diamond Dragon, a large creature of over 20 meters in height.

During the following long months, the Diamond Dragon needed to constantly increase the amount of cold air inside its body,

reducing its temperature. Once the Diamond Dragon's body changed from its milky-white color back to its transparent color, it would become a true Diamond Dragon. A Glacial Armor near absolute zero would have extremely high hardness, a level that no typical person could ever imagine.

-273.15 degrees Celsius is deemed as "absolute zero", the lowest possible temperature in the natural world. At absolute zero, all movements are ceased. Theoretically speaking, gas also has no volume. Thus, everyone understands why temperature cannot go any lower than this point, why in reality, this temperature can't even be truly reached, only approached.

A genuine Thousand Year Dragon, putting aside discussion of combat, would be hard just to approach. It was basically asking for a violent death. Getting near the super temperature of absolute zero was something completely impossible. Aside from time, it seemed that almost everything could be sealed by absolute zero ice.

Although the Mage Saint could activate forbidden magics at absolute zero, this was really something only the Diamond Dragon King could do in this world. No other creature could truly release a magic at absolute zero. Nobody had even witnessed what this temperature was like; anyone that had seen it had definitely been eternally sealed in its ice. It's said that...the absolute zero ice that objects could get sealed in would never melt, even after thousands of years.

Suo Jia looked at the Diamond Dragon's little head currently bobbing left and right as it was crawling along the ground with a pleased expression on its face. He couldn't help but grow excited;

in the near future, Suo Jia would be able to ride this fellow and soar up into the skies. Although its body was a bit on the smaller side, that was only relative to a true Diamond Dragon.

Once the Diamond Dragon summoned its Glacial Armor and entered its combat state, its size would exponentially increase to five meters in height, the same level as a two-story building. It would also be extremely thick and solid, so a single person riding it wouldn't be an issue. Two people riding it however, gave rise to the concern that once the dragon flew too fast, someone would fall off.

Suo Jia's eyes suddenly flashed. Although...the Diamond Dragon had already entered the long-term period...there were possibly still a thousand years until it actually became mature. Based on past examples, if the Diamond Dragon could complete an 100 year process in only eight years, then a thousand year process would require 80 years time.

“Hehe...” Suo Jia chuckled darkly. He knew that his current state combined with his control over the water elements meant that he could live up to 200 years old. In other words, within his lifetime, he could definitely witness the little pet mature into a true Thousand Year Dragon, the world's peerless king: the Great Frost Wyrms King.

Suo Jia threw his head up and laughed loudly. While doing so, Suo Jia continued to take large steps along the path through the plains, continuing his advance forwards. Hearing the sound of footsteps, the Diamond Dragon suddenly opened its eyes. When it saw Suo Jia's figure gradually move further and further, it quickly

climbed up, and chased after Suo Jia like a little dog.

Chapter 273: City Of Warriors (Part 1)

The rest of the journey didn't exactly go smoothly. They continuously encountered various types of magical beasts that fought to jump out from the nearby grasses and attack Suo Jia and Nicole first. This scared Suo Jia and Nicole quite a bit, and they didn't dare at all to quickly advance.

Currently, neither Suo Jia nor Nicole could face off against a magical beast at close range. Although Suo Jia had the magic shield, and Nicole had stealth, their abilities and spirit power had limits. They couldn't possibly maintain these states forever.

The Magical Beast Plains were extremely dangerous, as multiple magical beasts many times more powerful than Nicole or Suo Jia could leap out at any moment in time. The slightest moment of carelessness would lead to instant death. Nobody would ever dare to let down their guard here.

With lack of better choice, Suo Jia could only summon the Water God's Shield, while Nicole entered her stealth state. After rushing through for a length of time, they immediately made the Diamond Dragon change to its combat state and act as a guard, while Suo Jia and Nicole focused on restoring their energies as fast as possible. Whenever the Diamond Dragon finished resting, the roles would switch over once more. However, this meant that Suo Jia would have to carry the Diamond Dragon whenever they advanced, as the Diamond Dragon required a stable environment for it to concentrate on restoring its energy.

After using up a tremendous amount of their strength and

experiencing many life or death situations, Suo Jia and Nicole finally managed to successfully pass through the great plains. By that time, their spirit energies were extremely weak and at their limits. As soon as they found a hotel, they immediately collapsed into a deep slumber for three days and three nights, before finally relieving some of their tension.

Suo Jia and Nicole were relaxed as they sat in the hotel that morning, contently eating the delicious food. After going hungry for three days, anything they ate tasted amazing. They had come to cherish these little moments, especially after several life or death experiences.

The path through the plains that should've originally taken only 3 days to cross had taken Suo Jia and Nicole an entire week instead. The massive amount of spirit power and physical strength they had consumed was something that they hadn't previously imagined. Whenever they recalled their experiences that week, Suo Jia and Nicole couldn't help but tremble. They'd pretty much been unable to even sleep for an entire week.

After a long while of silently eating...Nicole finally lifted her head and earnestly said to Suo Jia, "Suo Jia, after passing through the plains this time, I'm sure you've realized that the two of us alone aren't qualified to go adventuring, let alone around the Greater Trade Routes."

Suo Jia didn't understand much about adventuring. He looked at Nicole in confusion and frowned, "You mean..."

Nicole firmly replied, "Some occupations are dispensable in an

adventure group, but others are necessary. Our past experience alone can already completely prove this point.”

Suo Jia put down the cutlery in his hands and lowered his head in thought. After a long time, Suo Jia’s eyes suddenly lit up, and he quickly raised his head to reply to Nicole, “I’ve got it. We need a warrior, a true warrior. Right?”

Nicole bitterly smiled and nodded, “Does that even need to be thought over? Something like that is obvious. The reason we struggled so miserably this time was solely because we’re lacking a true warrior to protect us.”

Nicole paused for a bit before continuing, “Because we’re lacking a warrior, we don’t have anyone to directly face-off the magical beasts that pop out at us. If we had a warrior accompanying us, we wouldn’t be in such a difficult situation. The warrior would be completely responsible for holding off the beast when it first appears, giving us the chance to prepare. It wouldn’t be like now, when we have to maintain our combat state all the time. We’ll eventually be exhausted to death.”

Nodding his head in thought, Suo Jia sighed and replied, “That’s right, how could I forget something so simple? In reality, the two of us lack an unyielding defense and a strong body, rendering us unable to go against a magical beast that suddenly appears. If we had a warrior, our lives would be much easier.”

Suo Jia loudly slapped his hand on the table and firmly declared, “Alright. In that case, our next step is to look for a powerful warrior, hehe...”

Nicole smiled and nodded, replying in agreement, “That’s right. That’s exactly what we need to do. Otherwise, there’s no way we’ll be able to get very far. Before we even reach the Greater Trade Routes, we’ll die of exhaustion.”

“But...” Suo Jia nodded and smiled grimly, “Originally, I had been trying to build up a group of powerful warriors. You’ve seen them as well, they’re definitely formidable.”

“Mhm...” Nicole nodded furiously in fear and replied, “That’s right, I did indeed see them. I’ve even fought against them quite a few times. Those people are definitely very mighty. Their entire bodies are impervious to sword and spear, and they’re also abnormally fast. Their attacks are terrifyingly explosive as well. If one of them could come, our journey would be too easy.”

“Sigh...” Suo Jia blankly lifted his head to look at the sky outside the window. “It’s a pity that my eight year long relationship with them wasn’t as important as money or power. They’ve already betrayed me.”

Nicole glanced at Suo Jia. Although Suo Jia hadn’t ever said anything about them this whole time, Nicole was exceptionally intelligent, and had long already guessed this fact. If nothing had changed, why would Suo Jia have left so easily? Considering the fact that he’d already walked out of the empire, he’d most likely have lost everything already.

Nicole smiled and said consolingly, “You shouldn’t mind it too

much. It's hard to tell whether that supposed blessing in disguise will bring you fortune or disaster. Who knows, there might be an even more powerful warrior waiting before us."

Nicole stood up with a smile and said, "Let's go, we should use our time wisely. We can't let that warrior end up running off with someone else. Otherwise, it'll be too great of a loss on our part."

"Eh?" Suo Jia stood up in astonishment and asked in confusion, "Why are you in such a hurry? Even if you want to find one, you need extensive planning first. Do you plan on just running around randomly? Do you know where to look for one?"

Nicole charmingly turned around and made a funny face at Suo Jia before smugly replying, "Who do you think I am? I'm the outstanding treasure hunter from my family. How could I not know where to find an Advanced Warrior? I know that better than anyone else."

"Where?" Suo Jia asked curiously.

"Hehe..." Nicole chuckled mysteriously and said proudly, "For now, I won't tell you the exact location. Just follow me, you'll figure it out when the time comes."

Chapter 274: City Of Warriors (Part 2)

Seeing as Nicole wasn't willing to say, Suo Jia didn't bother asking any further. He trusted Nicole's words completely; even if he didn't believe Nicole herself, Suo Jia couldn't possibly find reason to suspect her family, which had produced 10 Legendary ranked and 1 Epic ranked heroes.

Under Nicole's lead, they experienced an arduous journey passing through three countries. Finally...three days after Suo Jia's 16th birthday, they successfully reached a small country with a population of only a million...Banja.

Banja was a country founded by warriors. Although there were only a million people, the country had never been destroyed. It wasn't that others hadn't tried to seize Banja's territory, but because all the powers that attempted to invade were all punished severely. After suffering from major losses, they were all forced to miserably retreat.

Although Banja's million citizens couldn't be said to bring the entire nation to arms, they could gather 500,000 men within a few days once a war started. The men, women, old, and the young, were all exquisite experts in the military arts.

While their numbers were small, their reputation wasn't at all. Historically, Banja had always produced Advanced Warriors, as well as a large bunch of renowned, Legendary ranked heroes. The amount of Epic ranked heroes even numbered more than one could count on their hands. Moreover...these heroes were all warriors without exception.

In reality, Suo Jia also knew Banja's unique trait. However... since Suo Jia wasn't very familiar with the locations of the various countries, he didn't realize how close Banja was, and that it could be reached so conveniently.

Nicole led Suo Jia to the capital of Banja: Banja. The country of Banja was actually just a large city, and the vast territory around it. Strictly speaking, the country of Banja had 5 cities, but these 5 cities were all connected. Thus, in Suo Jia's eyes, it still counted as one city.

Among the five cities, Banja City was the one right in the center. The other four surrounded it, forming a huge residential area. Due to the buildings being somewhat scattered, the city ended up blending together with everything else. After thousands of years of development, the boundaries between the territories had long since disappeared.

According to its reputation for producing warriors, the country didn't establish any unions for mages, thieves, or other occupations. It could be said that all the citizens were warriors. All the males, females, old, and young on the streets wore warrior's armor, with blades and other weapons hanging from their waists or on their backs.

Suo Jia sighed in admiration at the people walking around the streets. Suo Jia had never seen so many warriors before in his life. Every single citizen here was a warrior.

Nicole excitedly said, “Suo Jia, a week from now, Banja will have its annual warrior competition. Hehe...if you want to find a companion, going there would be the best place to go.”

“Oh.” Hearing Nicole’s words, Suo Jia’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. Since ancient times, the warriors of Banja all said that if one could invite the annual champion of the tournament to accompany them onto the Greater Trade Routes, hehe....

“Thump...thump...” As Suo Jia was thinking this, the low sound of footsteps came from behind him. At the same time, he could sense an oppressive aura coming from the same direction. For a moment, Suo Jia felt as if he was suffocating.

Suo Jia turned around in shock, glancing behind him. He saw a figure that wasn’t very tall and sturdy, yet wasn’t weak and frail either, currently with their head lowered as they gradually walked over.

Robust and sturdy were both adjectives that didn’t seem very fitting to describe this fellow’s body. While he wasn’t very tall, he stood very straight. He didn’t seem that sturdy, but quite elegant. Moreover, his entire body emitted that stifling aura that made it hard for others to breathe.

These things weren’t the things that had caught Suo Jia’s attention the most. What had left the deepest impression on him was that while this guy was wearing light armor, he was carry numerous weapons on his back.

That oppressive man had already passed by Suo Jia. At such close range, Suo Jia had finally gotten a good glance at those weapons. In that moment, he couldn't help but gasp.

After carefully counting, Suo Jia concluded that there were seven weapons on the man's back. The largest one was a large, inverse crossblade. The blade shaft was half a meter long. While on his back, the long hilt poked out from behind his head, and was clearly over half a meter long.

It wasn't just the height; this large blade's handguard was the shape of a cross that stretched out on both sides for over 10 centimeters. At first glance, this guy seemed to be carry a heavy cross, or perhaps...he was even tied to the cross.

There were three sheathed blades hanging on either side of the crossblade's handguard. Because the sheathes were covering the weapons, Suo Jia couldn't tell if they were sabres or swords. However, he could say for certain that these weapons were all different sizes.

If one looked from left to right from behind with the large crossblade as the center point, one could see six other sharp blades hanging down. The leftmost one was smallest in size, while the rightmost one was largest in size.

The figure slowly turned around the corner, disappearing from Suo Jia's line of sight. At the same time, Nicole's voice rang out, "Suo Jia, did you see that strange person? God...to think that he was carrying so many weapons. What do you think he does?"

“That...” Suo Jia bitterly smiled and shook his head, replying, “I can’t possibly answer your question. Who knows what he does? Unless...you do?”

“Mhm.” Nicole nodded with certainty and grinned, “According to laws of this country, those carrying one weapon on their backs are Warrior Trainees. Those that carry two are Advanced Warriors, three are Peak Warriors.”

“Oh.” Suo Jia stared in shock in the direction that the guy had disappeared in and sighed, “That fellow just now was carrying seven weapons. That means...”

Nicole laughed loudly at replied, “What are you talking about? Let me tell you, carrying three is the limit. Any more means the person is definitely weapons trafficking. That’s why I can tell you for sure that the person just now was definitely peddling weapons.”

“No way!” Suo Jia cried out in astonishment.

Nicole proudly straightened her back and chuckled, “This is something I definitely wouldn’t mistake. Using my special thief abilities just now, I carefully checked him; he doesn’t have any magic power or battle qi on his body, so he can’t be a warrior or a mage. In that case, what could he be aside from a weapons peddler?”

The more Nicole explained, the more confident she began to feel

in her answer. She firmly continued, “He definitely procured some weapons to come and sell them here after hearing how Banja was a country founded by warriors, where all of its citizens are warriors as well. This is definitely the case.”

After hearing Nicole’s words, Suo Jia looked into the distance thoughtfully. He couldn’t bring himself to believe Nicole’s words. The stifling atmosphere the warrior had given off just now was still fresh in his mind. That wasn’t something any normal person could emit.

However, Suo Jia obviously didn’t retort. Based on his understanding of girls, any guy that tried to argue with a girl about the truth was an absolute idiot. Even though there was some reasoning behind his thoughts, he couldn’t explain it clearly either. After all, Suo Jia’s opinion was based off his subconscious feeling. He didn’t have any actual proof.

Suo Jia and Nicole found a hotel together. Since there was still a week before the annual competition, the two began closed door training in the meantime. Since they were going to go on the Greater Trade Routes, having the slightest bit more strength would increase the chances of them staying alive.

Their training time passed very quickly, and a week’s time passed in the blink of an eye. The day of the competition, Suo Jia met up with Nicole to prepare to go watch the competition. However, they soon discovered a problem.

The great competition was held at Banja Arena. Spectating was fine, but it required the purchasing of an entrance ticket. However,

Suo Jia and Nicole had been immersed in their closed door training this whole time, and had completely forgotten about such matters.

By the time Suo Jia had rushed to the outside of the arena, the competition had already started. Originally...Suo Jia had only planned on watching the finals portion of the competition. After all...neither he nor Nicole were warriors, so watching any more wouldn't be beneficial. But the problem was, without the entrance ticket, they couldn't even enter the arena.

Suo Jia helplessly said, "It looks like we won't get a chance to watch the competition. But it's not that big of a deal, once the competition ends, we'll know who the champion is. Then, we can just directly look for that person, and invite them to join us."

Nicole reluctantly nodded and replied, "Sigh...I guess that's the only thing we can do now. Let's go...the results of the competition won't be out for another three days. We should just continue training."

During the next three days, Suo Jia and Nicole continued to stay shut inside. Soon...the three days had passed, and the great Banja competition had finally ended. The champion had been properly declared as well.

Without even needing to leave the hotel, Suo Jia had already heard who the champion was. He'd even managed to learn of where the person lived. Without wasting any time, Suo Jia quickly led Nicole to buy a large pile of gifts on the street, and rushed over to the champion's home.

While on the way, Suo Jia had also bought some pamphlets announcing the champion. When he read it closely, he learned that this year's competition champion was a swordsman who was 44 years old this year, in his prime. His strength was extremely great, and he definitely had the qualifications to adventure through the Greater Trade Routes.

They swiftly continued on their journey, before the two of them finally arrived in front of a large house. When they saw the great gates, as well as its imposing courtyard, it was clear to see that this 'Picolo' person wasn't some new figure. Otherwise, he couldn't have advanced so smoothly.

Under Suo Jia's suggestion, Nicole walked up and knocked on the door. After handing over the presents, she stated the purpose of her visit. Of course...Nicole didn't say that she'd come to ask Picolo to join a group. This was something that she couldn't possibly tell the guard. Nicole only said that she'd long heard of Picolo's fame, and wanted to meet him once.

With such expensive presents, Picolo obviously couldn't refuse to meet them. Soon...the guard led Suo Jia and Nicole into the courtyard. For a moment, Suo Jia's heart couldn't help but race. Exactly what kind of person was this Picolo? Would he accept their invitation?

Chapter 275: Peak Battle (Part 1)

Following the guard's lead, Suo Jia and Nicole finally met Picolo. Although he was already over 40 years old, he only looked around 30 years old because he had trained for so long.

His body was exceptionally healthy and sturdy, and it could be said that he had a tough and stocky build. His arms alone could already rival Suo Jia's thighs. His whole body was bursting with muscles. It was clear to see that he was an extremely mighty person.

The host and guests all sat down. Suo Jia hesitated for a bit, before getting right to the point as he said, "Mister Picolo, I came here today to invite you to become our companion and go experience the Greater Trade Routes. I wonder if Mister Picolo...."

Picolo was taken aback first, but he then coolly and calmly picked up the teacup in front of him to take a slow sip. After placing the cup back down, he smiled at Suo Jia and said, "The Greater Trade Routes? I'd definitely go, but...it wouldn't be now, or with you two."

Picolo swept a glance over Suo Jia and pursed his lips. "Young friend, I greatly admire your courage. But as a person, you must be able to assess your own capabilities. I believe it's best that you train for a few dozen more years before reconsidering visiting the Greater Trade Routes."

"Mmm. What...does that mean Mister Picolo doubts my

strength?” Suo Jia couldn’t help but say.

“No, no, no...” Picolo hurriedly waved his hands and laughed, “I didn’t mean that. In reality, I’ve already been invited by countless groups to join them. But I believe that my own strength still isn’t enough; I’m not yet qualified to advance down the Greater Trade Routes.”

Suo Jia gazed deeply at Picolo and said, “You’re already the champion, yet you still don’t have enough confidence? If you don’t have the qualifications to, then who in the world would?”

“That...” After stuttering for a bit, Picolo bitterly smiled and replied, “Of course I can go now. But...I don’t think you guys are suitable to be my companions. I’m sure you understand what I mean.”

“Oh.” Suo Jia nodded. He knew that no matter how much it was sugarcoated, Picolo simply thought their levels were too low in the end. Even if they did go to the Greater Trade Routes, he’d have to find some stronger companions.

Suo Jia couldn’t stay any longer. He smiled as he stood up and said, “Alright. In that case, I won’t keep trying to force Mister Picolo.” Suo Jia shot Nicole a glance, then stood up to leave. Picolo didn’t bother trying to hold him back.

After leaving Picolo’s residence, Nicole asked in confusion, “Suo Jia, I don’t really understand. I feel like you’re not someone that gives up easily. If you had a proper conversation with him, and had

given some more money or briefly displayed our strength, he might've agreed. Is that not so?"

Suo Jia pursed his lips in disdain and said, "It looks like you still don't get why I left. Let me ask you, what's the most important characteristic a warrior must have?"

Nicole looked at Suo Jia and said curiously, "Is that even a question? Of course it's courage. Without courage, one couldn't possibly qualify as a warrior."

"That's right..." Suo Jia nodded in agreement, and stated in contempt, "The current problem is that Picolo is lacking in precisely that. Think about it, even you and I dare to go on the Greater Trade Routes, but he's already over 40 years old and still so cowardly. It's fine if we don't have this kind of companion."

"Ah!" Nicole cried out in astonishment, "Now that you mention it, that's true. His courage does seem to be a bit lacking; he's too afraid of dying. No matter how strong a person is, it won't be of any use if they can't summon it during critical moments. There's no 'strongest' on the Greater Trade Routes, only 'stronger'. Nobody is unrivaled. Any person could experience a life or death situation at any moment."

"Mhmm..." Suo Jia nodded and continued, "Think about it. The reason he turned us down was because we were too weak. In other words, regardless of what group he joins, he plans to rely on others, not be the one relied on. This kind of group member would become an outstanding figure when encountering some minor catch, but they can't do anything when they encounter a true

expert.”

“Mmmm...” Nicole furiously nodded and firmly declared, “You’re right, you can’t be any more correct. We wouldn’t want to accept that kind of person as our companion anyways. If one wants to join us, they must first be unafraid of death. Otherwise, they aren’t qualified.”

“Thump...thump...” Just as the two were discussing this, the clear sound of footsteps rang out from in front of them. When they looked up in surprise, they saw a tall and upright figure currently turning around the corner and heading towards them.

“It’s him.” When Suo Jia saw the figure with seven weapons on his back, he couldn’t contain his low cry of astonishment.

Suo Jia and Nicole watched as that upright body lowered its head slightly, and brushed past Nicole and Suo Jia once more. For a moment, they both seemed to have forgotten to move, and they simply stared blankly at that strange person.

The strange person carrying seven weapons on his back walked up to the entrance of Pico’s home, and lightly knocked the door. Afterwards...he closed his eyes and quietly waited at the door.

Soon afterwards, the same guard as before rushed over and welcomed that strange person in. Seeing this, Nicole couldn’t help but clap her hands and laugh out loud, “How about it? I was right after all. That guy definitely heard the other party was the champion that had earned a great amount of gold, and so he came

here to sell weapons.”

Suo Jia’s expression remained solemn. After some hesitation, he firmly stated, “Nicole, go back with me now. That guy isn’t there to sell weapons. Although he purposely hid it, I can sense from his body that he has the intent to fight.”

Nicole stared at Suo Jia in disbelief and said, “How is that possible? He doesn’t have any hint of battle qi or magic power. Why would he challenge the champion? That’s too ridiculous...”

Suo Jia shook his head and said in a low voice, “Whether it’s funny or not, we’ll know as soon as we go back and look. From the first glance, I felt that this person wasn’t simple. It looks like...my feeling was correct.”

Suo Jia suddenly turned around and rushed back to Pico’s residence at full speed. Seeing this, Nicole reluctantly followed him. The two of them hid their tracks, and jumped over the walls to re-enter Pico’s courtyard.

Since they’d already come before, the two of them already knew what the layout of Pico’s home was like. After entering the courtyard one by one in their concealed states, they peeked into the house through a crack in the rock garden.

There was a vast training ground in the large courtyard. At the moment...Pico was facing the strange person carrying seven weapons with a relaxed expression on his face.

After standing in silence for a long time, Pico shot a lazy glance at the strange person and said, “Young man, although I admire your bravery, it isn’t wise to be over confident. At the moment, you still aren’t my rival. It’s best if you just leave now.”

Faced with Pico’s taunting, the strange person carrying seven weapons slowly reached into his pocket and pulled out a fire-red wristguard. “I’ll bet this wristguard from the Legendary ranked Fire Dragon equipment set. If you beat me, it’s yours.”

Pico looked at the fire-red wristguard and his eyes lit up. He sharply gasped and trembled, “You...you’re really betting that? You’d better not regret it.”

The strange person lowered his head, his long black hair covering his eyes. The corners of his mouth lifted to show a trace of a dark smile and he replied softly, “There’s no way I’d regret it. As long as you don’t, everything’s OK. Come...let me taste the strength of Banja’s greatest.”

Chapter 276: Peak Battle (Part 2)

Piccolo gazed intensely at the wristguard before taking a deep breath and saying resolutely, “Men, bring over my most powerful Raging Inferno Sword.” Following his order, two guards rushed over with a blazing crimson, two meter long sword in their hands. From their twisted expressions, one could see that this precious sword was abnormally heavy.

“Hum...” Piccolo gripped the hilt of the large sword. By just exerting a tiny bit of strength, Piccolo lifted the Raging Inferno Sword. He confidently swung it, and it emitted a low whistling sound.

“Hahaha...” Piccolo lifted his head and laughed, and he lightly used one hand to wipe clean the precious sword as he said, “This is the Raging Inferno Sword I relied on to make my name. If you beat me, it’s yours.”

The mysterious person nodded, and slowly stretched out his hand, probing around the seven weapons on his back. Suo Jia and Nicole secretly watched as the mysterious person’s hands moved past the handles of weapon after weapon. His eyes remained locked onto Piccolo the whole time, and the glow in his eyes made it seem like he was pondering something.

“Bang...tinkle.” Finally, the mysterious person chose a weapon. His right hand grasped it, and he swung his arm to bring the blade out. With the crisp, resounding clang, a dazzling light suddenly flashed.

Suo Jia looked at the weapon in the strange person's hand, and finally figured out what weapon the person used; it was a sabre. A bright, long sabre that emitted eye-piercing rays from reflecting the sunlight, making it impossible for anyone to look at it directly.

This sabre had the most reasonable length among the seven weapons the strange person was carrying. It was neither too long nor too short. Nobody would doubt its sharpness, but it seemed to be missing a domineering aura.

Suo Jia and Nicole watched the strange person flip his hair, then slowly raise his right arm. The meter long sabre in his hand was pointed at Picolo. At the same time, the strange person said in a frigid voice, "The sabre's name is Waxing Moon. It uses the Waxing Moon Blade Technique. Please guide me."

"Oh." Picolo nodded curiously and smiled, "Waxing Moon Blade Technique? This is the first time I've heard of it. Come...let me witness your so-called Waxing Moon moves."

It was clear to see that Picolo wasn't really taking this strange person seriously; there was no way Picolo treated this guy as a true opponent. But he couldn't really be blamed for this; there were absolutely no undulations of battle qi or magic power coming from the strange person's body. Without these things, even the strongest person couldn't ever go up against a true expert.

In response to Picolo's scorn, the strange person only took a deep breath and slowly closed their eyes, as if already accustomed to such treatment. At the same time, Picolo laughed and said, "You're a guest that came from far away, so you should go first. You can

come and attack any time you're ready."

Following Piccolo's words, a breeze suddenly began to spin around Piccolo's body. At first, everyone present thought that it was just some wind in the courtyard. However, the next moment, they all realized that there was no way this wind was natural.

The fierce wind loudly whirled around the strange person, forming a cyclone that began to suck in the dust and grass from the ground. At the same time, an enormous, indescribable pressure could be felt coming from the strange person's body.

This was a hurricane evoked from energy, a mighty pressure created from dominance. After feeling this extremely stifling presence, Nicole's jaw dropped open in shock. Although she hadn't been able to sense this before, even an idiot would be able to feel that the powerful pressure the strange person was now giving off without purposely repressing it.

Nicole softly approached Suo Jia's ear and sighed in praise, "You were too right. This person really isn't normal. For him to be able to hide such a powerful pressure from us, I wonder how he did it."

"Yea..." Suo Jia nodded while deep in thought, and agreed, "That's right. Normally, I can only tell if he has battle intent, but I can't sense the energy in his body at all. His power is too reserved, too concentrated. I've never seen anything like it before."

"I agree..." Nicole firmly stated, "This definitely isn't battle qi. But judging from just its capabilities, it's still battle qi. However..."

his battle qi isn't emitted outwards, but is instead within his body. This is the first time I've ever seen this strange circulation method and this abnormal type of battle qi. Actually, I've never even heard of such a thing before."

Suo Jia nodded excitedly and replied in a low voice, "We should watch carefully. This fight definitely won't be as simple as Pico thinks. Look...he seems to have realized this as well."

Pico's expression had indeed grown more serious. Although his ability to sense others' powers wasn't as acute as a thief's, this was the first time he'd ever encountered such an overpowering and terrifying pressure that made it almost impossible for him to breathe.

Pressure was something that some people could naturally emit, while others relied on arduous training to learn it. But both types of such people were extremely rare. There were more of the latter type, who all became experts. A warrior that could draw out huge amounts of power would naturally be able to create this kind of pressure.

Historically speaking, people always talked about how mighty dragons were. This was firstly something innate for dragons, but secondly because the amount of power they could display was too great. Without even needing to move, they could terrify any person out of their wits.

In reality, something like pressure was something that almost any predator had, such as lions, tigers, and leopards. Whenever they attacked, their overwhelming pressure would be able to scare

something like a sheep so that its legs would go soft, making it impossible for it to run. It was also possible that it would be so scared that it'd lose its wits and run around randomly, eventually falling into the predator's mouth.

Although this was a trait that many animals had, this kind of thing still had levels. A fierce tiger's pressure couldn't compare to a great dragon's. An evil dog's couldn't compare to a fierce tiger's. This kind of thing was split into 3, 6, or even 9 ranks.

Looking at the youth in front of him, Picolo strongly believed that this person was naturally skilled at displaying pressure. Typically speaking, ruffian bullies were always skilled at using such methods, but...while they had powerful presence, they lacked that strong and solid strength. Thus, to Picolo, such people were insignificant.

However, against this gradually escalating pressure, Picolo couldn't bear not attacking first. He knew that in a contest of presence, he had already lost. It was a pity that he'd already stated that he'd let the opposite party move first. With his new status as the champion, he obviously couldn't go back on his words.

“Hah...!” Finally, the strange person gave a low roar, and the hurricane surrounding the strange person reached a terrifying intensity. The next moment...the strange person's body moved as fast as a cheetah, the Waxing Moon Blade flashing like lightning as it penetratingly cleaved outwards from the hurricane. For a moment, all the people present seemed to sense lightning flash and thunder roll. The instant the strange person's sabre pierced outwards, there seemed to be millions of thunderbolts crashing

down simultaneously.

The reason for this was because of the dazzling light the sabre gave off, as well as the world-destroying presence the strange person gave off. But most importantly, it was due to the sabre's speed and how it advanced with such confidence and resolution, like a thunderclap. Once the sabre slashed out, it seemed impossible to retract it.

"Clang." A fierce boom rang out. As expected of the annual competition's champion, Pico was able to meet even such a piercing sabre. In reality, all he did was tilt the great sword in his hand, and the thick body of it managed to completely intercept the opponent's long sabre. It didn't even shake.

"Mmm." Suo Jia inwardly felt that something wasn't right. Judging from the strange person's aura, this attack definitely couldn't be so simple. How could it be blocked so easily? Hadn't it just become a weak finish to a strong start?

Suddenly, a bright light seemed to flood the area and rise to the heavens as the long sabre and Pico's great sword came into contact. Immediately...the entire sabre seemed to curl backwards like a spring. Borrowing the energy from Pico's block, it easily turned around, and then shot back outwards even faster than before.

Only a moment had passed between the instant the two weapons had come into contact and when the long sabre had shot back out into the air like a bullet. Even though Suo Jia hadn't blinked, Suo Jia hadn't been able to see how the strange person had raised his

sword.

Chapter 277: Aqua Moon Blade Technique

(Part 1)

“Clang. Clang. Clang...” The resounding bangs all blended into one. The strange person’s long sabre hacked downwards again and again with unimaginable speed and power. Every time it struck Picolo’s great sword, it would borrow that power to rebound back up and cut down once more. The strange person didn’t seem to be using any effort at all.

In only the blink of an eye, the strange person had already slashed down dozens of times. The strikes exploded endlessly like gunfire as the Waxing Moon Blade filled the air with countless afterimages. It cut down from various angles and positions without stopping, and its overbearing aura was so heavy that it made it hard to breathe. All the spectators could do was watch blankly.

The Waxing Moon Blade was actually somewhere between a sabre and a sword. Its body was narrow, and had a slight curve. The point was terrifyingly sharp. In general, it was 30% like a sabre, 70% like a sword, and its extremely rapid strikes were impossible to see.

Everyone watched as the strange person continued to borrow power from Picolo, the war blade in his hand glowing as it struck out another 100 times like crashing thunder. Once it finally exhausted its power, it would retract once more.

Suo Jia sighed in great admiration at Picolo. As expected from the annual champion, his basic skills were so solid that it was frightening. Despite the hundreds of abnormal, concentrated

slashes coming at various angles, Picolo was still as steady as Mt. Tai.

The most shocking part was that from the beginning to the end of these attacks, Picolo hadn't yet panicked, not even advancing or retreating. He didn't make the slightest slip-up at all. All his movements and counters were as precise as a textbook, so exact and stable that it made goosebumps rise on the spectators' skins.

Any typical warrior would've fallen in defeat ages ago from the strange person's crazy attacks. But it was clear to see that Picolo's stable and steady style seemed to faintly restrain the strange person's Waxing Moon Blade Technique.

"Hehe..." Picolo arrogantly straightened his back and said to the opposite party, "Your blade technique is indeed not bad. However, you're still a bit too early to defeat me with just this."

The strange person looked at Picolo long and hard. Because of his long hair, nobody could really see his facial expression. After some silence, the strange person said in a low voice, "I hadn't imagined that despite using such a large sword, your swordplay would be so exquisite and elaborate. In terms of attack and defense, you've already reached the realm of perfection. Unless I can suppress you with power, it'll be hard to defeat you."

"Hehe..." Picolo laughed confidently. The next moment...his expression suddenly grew darker. He abruptly reached out, the Raging Inferno Sword in his hand piercing outwards like lightning towards the strange person. At the same time, he fiercely spat out, "You've been attacking for a long time. Now...it's my turn to

attack.”

The strange person clearly hadn't been prepared for Picolo's attack. After all...nobody had imagined that Picolo would attack so suddenly. Against Picolo's full-on slash, the strange person was finally put at a disadvantage.

“Clang. Clang. Clang...” A series of clanging sounds rang out once more as Picolo's Raging Inferno filled the air with its wild attacks. The strange person hurriedly stepped backwards; he couldn't possibly defend against it.

First of all, the strange person's abilities were clearly not as profound as the 40+ year old Picolo. Secondly...that narrow Waxing Moon Blade wasn't at all suitable for defense. Actually, one had to guard while attacking. Once the user was forced to fall into defense only, they'd pretty much lost.

After a succession of strikes, Picolo finally managed to sweep away the Waxing Moon Blade from the strange person's hands. Then...Picolo strode forwards with a straight back, before suddenly stomping on the ground in front of him. The Raging Inferno in his hands slashed out horizontally with a clap of thunder, fiercely chopping against the strange person's ribs.

Following Picolo's vicious attacks, the Raging Inferno Sword accurately struck the strange person's ribs. With a flash of crimson blood, the person's body was sent spiralling backwards through the air for over dozens of meters before heavily crashing into the ground.

Piccolo proudly straightened his back. He was extremely confident in his own attack, and he glanced at the collapsed body of the strange person on the ground while coldly declaring, “Men, bring me the item he betted. I am going back to rest.”

After hearing Piccolo’s words, Nicole couldn’t help but resentfully turn around and say to Suo Jia, “Young Master, doesn’t this count as a sneak attack? Isn’t it quite despicable?”

Suo Jia furrowed his brows as he locked his gaze onto the strange person collapsed on the ground. From beginning to end, he never believed that such a fellow would be defeated so easily. Suo Jia subconsciously shook his head in response to Nicole’s question and replied, “It counts. But it also doesn’t.”

Nicole stared blankly for a moment. What kind of answer was that? But when she thought about it more closely, she realized how fitting this reply was. Piccolo’s attack was indeed technically a sneak attack, but strictly speaking, it also wasn’t. One could only say that the strange person had lowered their guard.

Piccolo’s two guards began to walk towards the strange person, prepared to retrieve that Fire Dragon wristguard. However, the instant they stepped into the area, they directly fell to the ground. At the same time, the previously motionless strange person suddenly began to move.

Everyone watched as the strange person crawled up from the ground and ground out through gritted teeth, “Wait...wait a

moment. You haven't won yet."

Hearing the strange person's words, Pico, who had already turned around and started heading back to his room, stopped in his tracks. After some slight hesitation, he narrowed his eyes and turned around again, looking at the strange person who was currently struggling to stand. Pico just couldn't understand why, having fallen to this extent already, the opposite party still wanted to continue fighting. Was he seeking death?

Pico, as well as the hidden Suo Jia and Nicole, watched as the strange person shakingly struggled to stand up. Following his actions, crimson blood gushed out from his rib cage ceaselessly, dripping down his clothes and onto the ground. In a mere moment, it had already formed a puddle beneath him.

The strange person inspected his rib area, then smiled grimly before reaching out his left hand. He held his second, third, and fourth fingers together and struck himself around his rib area a few times at lightning fast speed. In that instant, his blood miraculously stopped flowing.

"That!" Suo Jia's expression changed to one of extreme shock. What was that? All he did was jab himself a few times, how had the blood flow stopped? Was it magic? He'd never heard of such a thing before.

After seeing the strange person's miraculous move that stopped the blood flow, Mister Pico could only stare blankly for a moment. However, he then began to chuckle as he shook his head and said, "So what if you can stop your bleeding? You should've

realized that your Waxing Moon Blade Technique is useless against me. Even if we continue fighting, you will still be defeated.”

The mysterious person took a deep breath and nodded. “That’s right, your words can’t be any more correct. I must admit that your swordplay is very mature, stable, almost without any mistakes. Choosing to use the Waxing Moon Blade Technique was the wrong decision.”

The mysterious person praised Picolo, “Originally, I had thought that you, a fire warrior, would definitely have great power and fierce moves, as well as domineering attacks as your main points. However, I hadn’t imagined that your swordplay could remain so careful and all-around while also maintaining the swordplay’s characteristic explosiveness.”

“Mmm...” Picolo nodded and freely said, “You should know that under the premise of my abilities overpowering yours, my swordplay can restrain your blade technique. You don’t have any chance of victory. In that case, why do you still want to continue the challenge?”

With a smile on his face, the mysterious person drew an intricate pattern in the air with the ruined sabre in a flurry of strokes before re-sheathing it on his back. Seeing this, Picolo couldn’t help but let out a breath of relief, thinking that the opposite party had already given up on continuing the fight.

Actually, Nicole had thought this as well, and even said so to Suo Jia. In response to Nicole’s judgment, Suo Jia shook his head wisely and replied, “No. He definitely isn’t giving up on this fight.

If you try to sharpen your senses, you'll be able to tell that his battle intent hasn't weakened at all; rather, it has grown more intense."

"Hm?" Nicole shot a bewildered look at the mysterious person. After closely inspecting him, she realized that it was indeed as Suo Jia had stated. Although she couldn't feel any battle intent, she had clearly seen that blazing fighting spirit in the mysterious person's eyes.

"Heavens. To think that he still wants to continue the fight." Nicole cried out in astonishment after seeing how the mysterious person was still in high spirits.

Everyone watched in anticipation as the mysterious person stealthily pressed his hand against his waist. With a sudden yank, a "Shiiing" sound could be heard as the brilliant glow of a blade suddenly filled the sky.

Chapter 278: Aqua Moon Blade Technique (Part 2)

For a moment, all the people present were temporarily blinded. Once they were able to see again, they saw that a two meter long, couple fingers wide blade had appeared in the strange person's hand. It was a long sabre that seemed like spring water.

Having strolled through many bazaars before, Suo Jia had pretty much seen all types of weapons. However, he couldn't help but admit that he'd never seen a blade like the one in the mysterious person's hands. Actually, he'd never even heard of such a thing before.

Despite being only four fingers wide, the entire blade was about two meters long. Its body was soft and flexible. Even when unmoved, it couldn't remain rigid and straight. The war blade was a weapon that perfectly combined the hardness, sharpness, and flexibility of steel, a soft sabre.

With a subtle shake of his wrist, a crash rang through the air as the entire war blade flashed with a brilliant light like a bunch of fireworks. At the same time, the mysterious person said, "This blade's name is Aqua Moon, and it uses the Aqua Moon Blade Technique. Please guide me."

"Oh?" Piccolo couldn't help but grow curious as he looked at the long, strange sabre in the mysterious person's hand. Similar to Suo Jia, he'd never seen such an abnormal war blade before.

“Clang.” Under Picolo’s inquisitive gaze, the mysterious person’s wrist suddenly flicked to the side and...the two meter long soft sabre suddenly straightened itself. Then...the mysterious person turned around, using the momentum from the spin to thrust his arm out and cut down with the sabre with a fierce and violent slash towards Picolo.

Picolo couldn’t help but be taken aback for a moment by the mysterious person’s slash. The large sword in his hand was held up horizontally, prepared to block the opposite party’s attack. Seeing this, the mysterious person couldn’t help but smirk. With another slight bend of his wrist, the soft sabre’s original slash was changed into a chop with its flat side.

“Clang.” A loud crash resonated through the air as Picolo’s large sword successfully blocked the soft sabre. However, because the mysterious person had turned their blade, only the side of the soft sabre was intercepted.

That wasn’t all. Because the timing of the turn had been so well-planned....although Picolo had blocked the blade’s side, the sabre’s horizontal form was still preserved.

Everyone watched as the entire soft sabre used the large sword as support and quickly curved down. Its sharp point followed the arc of the body, and piercingly slashed at Picolo.

Against such a bizarre attack, Picolo had absolutely no time to contend or defend against it. The brilliant soft sabre’s point instantly left behind a white scar on Picolo’s armor. If his armor hadn’t been pretty hard, that slash would’ve been enough to slice

Piccolo in half.

“Shualala...” Despite the fact that the slash had no effect, the mysterious person was not dismayed. With another flick of his wrist, the brilliant soft sabre was instantly retracted. He stood there, calm and composed, and smiled at Piccolo, “The Aqua Blade and its Aqua Blade Technique cannot be blocked, like a sword slashing the reflection of the moon in water. How could you possibly hit that? Like the reflection, the Aqua Moon Blade will always stay completely intact.”

“A good blade. A good blade technique...” Piccolo grew serious once more. Although he had only exchanged one attack with the mysterious person, he was already sure that both the Aqua Blade and its technique were abnormal and terrifyingly sinister. A single mishap could result in his defeat.

Suddenly, Piccolo’s body flashed a blazing crimson. Since the start of the battle, Piccolo had finally entered his strongest attack state; he no longer dared to underestimate his opponent at all.

“Haah...!” When the blazing fire elemental battle qi gathered together, Piccolo suddenly let out a shout. He stepped out and slashed outwards, and the flaming red sword qi flew out of the sword with a shriek as it slashed down, leaping straight towards the mysterious person.

The flaming red sword qi pierced the ground and split open a deep ditch. Rock shards flew out everywhere, flying out towards the mysterious person at incomparable speeds. However, the mysterious person simply smiled. With a bend of his knees, his

body was sent soaring through the air.

“Heavens,” Suo Jia couldn’t help but cry out when he saw the mysterious person jump up at least a dozen meters above the ground. It wasn’t actually the height that had shocked Suo Jia, but the way the person had jumped. He hadn’t used battle qi nor magic power to jump, yet he’d gotten so high up. That seemed completely impossible.

The mysterious person’s body twisted around like a dragon through the air. As he quickly spun around, the two meter long war blade in his hand filled the sky with balls of light that followed his body, heading down towards Picolo.

The Aqua Moon Blade was both wide and long. It shook violently and stirred through the air...and bright balls of light at least 4-5 meters in diameter plowed towards Picolo head-on. Because it reflected the sunlight, it was impossible for anyone to detect the Aqua Moon Blade’s exact location.

Staring up at the blade’s glow that filled the sky, Picolo felt powerless for the first time. For a moment, he felt as if he was currently standing next to a lake, and in front of him was the gleaming reflection of sunlight from the clear and crystalline water surface. Picolo knew that these dazzling waves of light were the origin of the Aqua Blade Technique’s fatal deadliness.

“Chi...” A vicious whistle rang out. Finally...Picolo was able to vaguely see the moon’s reflection within those crystalline waves of light coming from the blade. The image was trembling and faintly discernable, disappearing once more as soon as it was spotted. At

the same time, Picolo's body suffered from hundreds of needle-like attacks.

Suo Jia was so excited by the brilliant, firework-like glow coming off the blade that he seemed to have forgotten everything else as he stood up, watching the mysterious person finally slash out one last time. When the soft sabre struck Picolo's shoulder, its body seemed to take advantage of the blade's flexibility, and rolled back up to return.

After falling back to his original place, the mysterious person whirled the blade around in his hand, and like a legendary dragon returning to its lair, the two meter long sabre blade disappeared at the mysterious person's waist. This gave others the impression that it'd never even appeared in the first place.

Picolo hadn't died, in fact, he hadn't even gotten injured. The mysterious person's hundreds of attacks had all struck Picolo's armor instead. However, everyone knew that Picolo had already lost; it was a complete defeat, a pure loss.

It wasn't that the mysterious person didn't have the ability to harm Picolo with his slashes. Everyone knew that the mysterious person just didn't want to injure anyone. If he had the heart to do it, Picolo would've already become a corpse by now. That unusual Aqua Moon Blade and its technique were things that Picolo couldn't defend against, even if he wanted to. No matter how he tried to block it, the Aqua Moon Blade would always use some strange method to hit its target. Any resistance from Picolo seemed to only increase the Aqua Moon Blade's power.

This was a technique that perfectly combined both whip and blade styles. It could become soft, hard, bent, or straight however the user desired. Blocking an attack like that was something beyond Pico's abilities.

He stared blankly at the mysterious person for a while...finally, Pico sighed in disappointment and said, "Really an amazing blade and blade technique. I, Pico, admit that I'm not your opponent. I've lost."

Seeing Pico be so open and candid, Nicole quickly pulled Suo Jia back into the darkness and sighed in praise, "I hadn't guessed that Pico was actually so noble. Anyone that can face defeat straight-on is not a simple person."

"Tch..." Suo Jia curled his lips in disdain, "If that was truly the case, it'd be fine. The problem is, Pico didn't willingly admit defeat. He only realized that if he didn't, he'd just be humiliating himself. It's not like he could beat the other party up, so what could he do if he didn't concede?"

Nicole hurriedly glanced at Pico. Indeed...although he was diligently trying to control his expression, there was a reluctant glow that had never disappeared from Pico's eyes. Although he'd lost, he clearly wasn't sincere about it.

Hearing Pico concede, the mysterious person wordlessly sighed in disappointment and turned around to leave. Seeing this, Nicole asked in confusion, "Strange. Since he won, why didn't he collect the betting stake? Could it be...that he forgot that it was a gamble?"

Suo Jia shook his head and replied, “No...he didn’t forget. In reality, the original intention of his fight wasn’t for the sake of any item. He only wanted to use the challenge to increase his own strength and experience. Didn’t you notice something? There’s not a single decent piece of defensive equipment on his person, he’s only wearing normal clothes.”

Suo Jia no longer cared about being discovered, and he quickly stood up and urged, “Quick, we need to catch up to him. That mysterious and strange fellow is the most suitable person to be our companion.”

Chapter 279: Internal Competition (Part 1)

The mysterious person actually wasn't walking very quickly. For one, he was injured, and two, he didn't seem to be in any rush. His temperament always seemed as steady as water. So when Suo Jia and Nicole jumped over the walls, they managed to fall not far behind the mysterious person.

The two of them exchanged a glance, and they quickly increased their speeds as they chased after the mysterious person. At the same time, the mysterious person seemed to have sensed something. He abruptly stopped his advance, his right hand pressing against his waist. Suo Jia and Nicole knew that if they dared do anything with evil intent, the unfathomable, water mist-like Aqua Moon Blade would slash explosively out at them.

Not daring to take the risk, the two of them stopped moving, leaving a small distance left between them and the mysterious person. At the same time, Suo Jia said in a loud voice, "Don't tense up, we just wanted to discuss something with you."

Hearing this, the mysterious person gently loosened his right hand pressed against his waist. Of course, he didn't blindly believe in Suo Jia's words. The reason he'd relaxed was because Suo Jia and Nicole didn't have any traces of battle intent or murderous aura. In addition...Suo Jia's tone was very sincere and calm. That was why the person had lowered his guard.

The mysterious person turned around to look at Suo Jia and Nicole coldly. When the two of them caught up to him, he said, "You guys were watching the whole time during the last fight. I'd

like to know exactly what you are planning.”

Suo Jia scratched his head in embarrassment and chuckled awkwardly, “Actually, it’s nothing big. I just saw that your skills were pretty good, so I wanted to ask you to become our companion.”

“Companion?” The mysterious person furrowed his brows in bewilderment and shook his head. “I don’t believe I need any companions. The martial way is one of research, an extremely private practice. I’m sorry, but I don’t need any comrades.”

Suo Jia didn’t seem at all discouraged by the mysterious person’s rejection. He smiled and continued, “Hey, your current training methods are too inefficient. If you keep looking for challenges like this, how long will it take you before you manage to find a true expert? It’s not that I’m criticizing you, but even an expert like Picolo is a rare encounter for you, right?”

The mysterious person looked at Suo Jia in astonishment. After some hesitation, he cautiously replied, “What, if I become your comrade, I can encounter many experts?”

“Pa pa”. Loudly patting his chest, Suo Jia said with certainty, “Of course. I can conscientiously tell you now that the people like Picolo only make up the very typical forces in the place we are planning to go to. It’s full of people that are over 10 times more powerful than him. How about it, want to come with us?”

An unprecedented glow lit up in the mysterious person’s eyes.

Unfortunately, just as Suo Jia thought the person would agree, he shook his head and said, “No. I’ll stand by my previous words: I don’t need any companions. However...I would like you to tell me where this place is. I can go look for it myself.”

Suo Jia silently stared at the mysterious person for a while, before suddenly raising his head and laughing out loud. Suo Jia shook his head and said, “I don’t understand why you don’t want to go with us. As long as you honestly reply, I’ll tell you where this place is.”

The mysterious person looked intensely at Suo Jia and firmly stated, “Alright, I’ll be honest. The reason I don’t want to become your companion is because you guys are too weak. Once I become your comrade, a relationship will definitely form between us. During battles, you guys will become my burdens. Taking that into consideration, I’ll be unable to display my greatest strength.”

The mysterious person paused a bit before continuing, “As a warrior, I believe that the most important thing is to have a fearless heart. However, once I gain comrades, I’ll have one more thing to worry about. This is something I don’t desire.”

Suo Jia pursed his lips and shook his head, “I don’t think the same way. In my opinion, having a fearless heart alone isn’t enough to become the strongest existence. It’s said that moral people are unrivaled; one can only display their true strength when fighting for the sake of protecting others.”

The mysterious person frowned and replied in disdain, “How unoriginal are you? That’s a cliché phrase that even 3 year old

children in my village recite. In reality, true experts are fearless existences, not moral people like you state.”

The mysterious person firmly pressed, “Alright, I’ve already said my reason. Now it’s your turn to honor your word. Tell me... exactly what place are you talking about?”

Seeing the mysterious person act so stubborn, Suo Jia couldn’t help but sigh helplessly. Since he had already promised the other party, he couldn’t possibly go back on his words. He begrudgingly replied, “Alright, I’ll tell you. The place I’m talking about is the Greater Trade Routes.”

“Oh.” The mysterious person had an astonished expression as he said thoughtfully, “Recently, I’ve constantly heard of people talking about these Greater Trade Routes. Are there really that many experts there?”

Suo Jia smiled and replied with certainty, “If you don’t believe me, you can go back and ask Picolo. Even he, at his current level, doesn’t dare to go to that place without stronger companions first. What kind of place do you think it is then?”

With excitement lit eyes, the mysterious person resolutely stated, “Alright, thank you very much for your guidance. I’ll go take a look at those Greater Trade Routes, and see for myself whether there are really that many experts there.” The mysterious person strangely cupped his fists together at Suo Jia and Nicole, then turned around to leave.

After seeing the mysterious person cup his fists together, Nicole couldn't help but stare blankly for a while, trying to analyze his actions. She asked Suo Jia in confusion, "What was he doing?"

Suo Jia looked at the mysterious person and thoughtfully guessed, "I would think it's some type of etiquette, like how we wave hands. It's probably some type of farewell."

Just as Nicole had finished speaking, the mysterious person abruptly stopped in his tracks, and turned around to walk back. He asked Suo Jia in embarrassment, "That's right, can you tell me where exactly the Greater Trade Routes are? How do I get there?"

"That..." After wordlessly staring at the mysterious person for a while, Suo Jia awkwardly replied, "I'm very sorry, but honestly speaking, I only know of the place as well. I don't actually know its location."

"Mm." The mysterious person asked in confusion, "If you don't even know where it is, then why do you want me to become your companion?"

Suo Jia smiled in response and replied, "Although I don't know it, my companion does."

Suo Jia turned to his side and pointed at Nicole. "This person in front of you is a treasure hunter with a vast amount of knowledge, and is extremely proficient in the information about various countries all over the world. Only with her as a guide can one smoothly reach the Greater Trade Routes and advance through

them. Otherwise, one would probably get lost before even reaching it.”

“No way. I’ve traveled from the distant East, and rushed all the way here. It’s a path of thousands of kilometers, yet I didn’t get lost,” the mysterious person doubtfully replied.

Nicole rolled her eyes in exasperation and coldly stated, “You...do you think we’d trick you? Let me ask you, did you come here intentionally, or did you just randomly roam into here?”

“That..” The mysterious person stuttered awkwardly in response. It was clear to see that he hadn’t actually traveled thousands of kilometers and accurately found this place. He’d randomly wandered over with absolutely no idea where any city was.

Seeing the mysterious person’s embarrassed manner, Nicole continued, “How about it, you just randomly wandered in, right? Then let me ask you this, if you had continued walking that way, do you know where the next city would be?”

“I...don’t know that,” the mysterious person could only awkwardly reply.

Nicole continued to press in as the mysterious person shrank back more, “Then let me ask you again, if I asked you to bring us back to your village thousands of kilometers away, would you be able to guide us there?”

“That...” After struggling for a bit, the mysterious person finally apologized sincerely, “I’m sorry, I wronged you guys. I already understand now that despite knowing of the place, it is impossible to locate it. Only people that are truly familiar with it can find it.”

Nicole smugly lifted her chin and said proudly, “That’s right. What else did you think we treasure hunters did? Although we don’t dare to claim anything else, we can guarantee that in terms of worldly knowledge and comprehension, nobody else can compare to us. As long as we are your guides, we can make sure you accurately reach your objective no matter how far the journey is.”

The mysterious person looked back and forth between Suo Jia and Nicole, seemingly debating something. After a long while, he finally shook his head and said, “Well, no matter what, I must still thank you two for the information you’ve supplied to me. Let’s bid farewell here.” He once again cupped his fists and turned to leave.

Chapter 280: Internal Competition (Part 2)

“Wait,” Suo Jia suddenly shouted to stop the mysterious swordsman from leaving.

The mysterious swordsman abruptly stopped in his tracks once more, but he didn't turn around this time. Suo Jia smiled at the man's back and said, “The reason you aren't willing to become our companion is only because we're too young, and don't seem to be any skilled, right?”

Nicole found Suo Jia's words extremely strange. She tugged at Suo Jia's clothes and whispered, “Why must you have him become our comrade? Isn't he the same as Picolo? He also thinks that our abilities are too weak. Why must you insist on him?”

Suo Jia smiled at the mysterious swordsman's back and shook his head. “No, he's different. Although he thinks our abilities are too lacking, Picolo believes that we can't protect him, while this strange person thinks that we'll drag him down.”

“Tch...” Nicole tsked and muttered in annoyance, “No matter what, they both turned their backs on us. I don't want to become comrades with a person like that. If we're together every day, won't we annoy each other to death?”

“Haha...” Suo Jia shook his head and whispered back, “You, you never understand these kinds of things. Couldn't you tell from his words just now? The person in front of you is a hot-blooded, responsible, and loyal man. Once he becomes our companion, he'll

support us with his life. We only just met, so how could he be willing to hand his life over to us?”

“What?” Nicole was stunned. “When did he say he’d hand his life over to us? I didn’t hear it at all. Are you sure you weren’t hallucinating?”

Suo Jia shook his head and firmly replied, “Didn’t he say it? He said that if he became our comrade, we’d definitely form relationships with each other after being acquainted for so long. Once we encounter danger, we’ll end up being his burdens. For example, if we were captured by enemies with blades held against our throats, and he was threatened to place his weapons down, what is he supposed to do?”

“Oh.” Nicole’s jaw dropped open in shock and she excitedly stated, “I get it, I completely understand now. That guy is too straightforward. Either he doesn’t give us a single chance, or he becomes a mutual companion that he entrusts his life to. Indeed... there’s nobody more suitable than he is.”

Nicole hurriedly grabbed Suo Jia’s sleeve and urged, “Quick, hurry up and think of something. If we miss a fellow like that, where else are we supposed to find someone this great? We’ll end up regretting this for the rest of our lives.”

The mysterious swordsman had heard Suo Jia’s and Nicole’s blatant discussion just now. He shook his head helplessly and declared, “Oi, I’ve been listening the whole time. Can you please not discuss how to deal with someone right in front of the said person? It feels so strange.”

“Eh!” Hearing the mysterious swordsman’s voice, Suo Jia and Nicole couldn’t help but drop their jaws in shock. They had only just realized that the person hadn’t actually left this whole time, but had been closely listening to one side.

Suo Jia awkwardly rubbed his head and chuckled, “Friend, judging from your voice, you don’t seem that much older than us. I don’t understand, why are you so certain that we’d tie you down? Have you ever considered the possibility that you’d be burdens to us instead?”

“Hmm?” The mysterious swordsman cross his arms in front of his chest in interest, and the corners of his mouth lifted up to form a lazy smile. “That is really something I haven’t once considered. It’s also something completely impossible.”

“Fine,” Suo Jia firmly asserted, his eyes glowing. “No matter what, I will definitely make you our comrade today. Since you suspect our strengths, then go ahead and come at us with all you’ve got. You can choose either one of us. As long as you beat either of us two, we’ll turn around and leave, and won’t ever bring this up again.”

“Oh?” The mysterious swordsman was shocked, and he asked doubtfully, “Are you sure you know what you’re saying? I believe you’ve already watched the fight I just had with Picolo. Even with that, you’re still so confident?”

“Hehe...” Suo Jia laughed strangely and narrowed his eyes.

“Honestly, I’m not confident at all. In reality, who has 100% confidence before the start of a battle? Strictly speaking, if you challenge me, my chances of losing are definitely greater than 50%.”

The mysterious swordsman was extremely confused. “In that case, why are you still so persistent? I can honestly say that since I was 15, I’ve experienced around 96 fights, and I’ve had successive wins for the past 4 years.”

Suo Jia took a deep breath and nodded, “I know that even Pico couldn’t possibly draw out your strongest move. If I guessed correctly, you’re carrying seven different types of blades on your back, with each one having its own blade technique. I only saw two types, right?”

The mysterious person blankly raised his head to look up at the distant skies. He murmured, “In reality, I have 9 blades total. I have 7 on my back, one at my waist, and my last one is my life’s greatest secret. If anyone ever forces me to use this ninth blade, I believe it to be my loss, even if the other party isn’t the victor.”

The mysterious swordsman then lowered his head to look straight at Suo Jia and say, “Actually, you should realize that I wouldn’t choose a girl as my opponent. In other words, for the sake of making me your comrade, you’re challenging me, right?”

“Oi. What are you doing... are you discriminating against females? I refuse to believe it.” Nicole indignantly rolled up her sleeves, as if prepared to stir up a huge commotion.

Suo Jia smiled at Nicole, then said sincerely to the mysterious swordsman, “No, you’re mistaken...if you really chose Nicole as your opponent, then I can guarantee that you will at most be able to prevent yourself from losing. Actually beating her is definitely impossible.”

The mysterious swordsman was extremely shocked. He glanced at Nicole once more, then shook his head and said, “I really don’t understand what you guys are trying to do. Fine then...I won’t choose. You guys can decide who will challenge me.”

As soon as the mysterious person finished speaking, Nicole immediately jumped out. She arrogantly puffed out her chest and declared, “Since you look down on us girls so much, then I’ll be the one to defeat you.”

The mysterious swordsman indifferently nodded and replied, “Whatever, it’s the same no matter who comes at me. You decide on how we should compete.”

“Hmm...” Nicole rolled her eyes and smiled, “We aren’t enemies fighting to the death, but trying to learn more of each other through interaction to become companions. In that case... it doesn’t seem the best idea to have a life-or-death battle.”

“Mmm...” The mysterious swordsman nodded in agreement and smiled, “That’s right. No matter what, I never kill women. Naturally, that means we can’t possibly fight to the death. Tell me, exactly how should we compete then?”

Having already planned in advance, Nicole pulled out a thin rope and two golden coins. She then used her dagger to punch a hole in each of the coins, and strung the ropes through them to form two simple necklaces.

Nicole dropped one of the necklaces into the mysterious swordsman's hand and gestured, "Each of us will wear a necklace. Go on...hurry up and put it around your neck."

"This..." The mysterious swordsman hesitantly looked at the simple and crude necklace in his hands and bitterly smiled, "What's this for? I don't have the time to play around with you."

In response to the mysterious swordsman's dissatisfaction, Nicole seriously declared, "After putting on the necklaces, the gold coins will be on the area right underneath our throats. Whoever removes the other party's gold coin first in the battle is the winner. How about it?"

Chapter 281: Who Won, Who Lost? (Part 1)

The mysterious swordsman started at Nicole's words, then inspected the simple and crude necklace on his neck. He rubbed the golden coin, which was indeed just under his throat.

The mysterious swordsman nodded in satisfaction and agreed, "Very good. This competition is quite interesting. If one can walk away with the other's golden coin, they can naturally slash open their throats as well. This is indeed the best way to compete!"

The mysterious swordsman rubbed the string around his neck. After confirming it was sturdy enough, he inquired, "Oh right, there's no restriction to the methods we use to retrieve the coins, right? Can I use my blades to do so?"

Nicole smiled and nodded, confidently replying, "Of course you can. Whoever touches it wins, right?"

"Mhm..." The mysterious swordsman agreed. "That's right, we're just using the coins to substitute as our throats. Everyone knows that once the throat is wounded, it's hard to remain alive! Touching the coin is equivalent to winning."

"Wait!" Nicole suddenly raised her right pointer finger and sternly warned, "But you have to be extra careful. Touching it qualifies as victory. If you touch any other part of the other person's body aside from the coin, it's your loss. You have no problems with that, right?"

He nodded in agreement and smiled, “That’s very fair, very rational. Since there are differences between males and females, they shouldn’t have direct contact. Indeed, it would be inappropriate to touch any other places. In addition...if I really did touch someplace else, it would indicate that my skills aren’t proficient enough, and that my control is lacking. In such a case, I should concede!”

“Hehe...” Nicole smirked oddly and drew out her dagger. At the same time, she said, “Alright, I’m ready. Just waiting on you!”

The mysterious swordsman smiled and shrugged. He raised his hand to draw the smallest and shortest of the seven blades on his back. The instant the blade was unsheathed, his expression suddenly grew calm as he entered an amazing state of mind.

Looking closer, it was a blade two fingers wide and 30-40 centimeters long. The blade’s body was incomparably bright, and there was a crimson groove that penetrated through its middle. A single glance was enough to give anyone the feeling that it was unrivaled in sharpness.

The handle of the blade already gave a throat-chilling feeling. Although the distance between them was far, Suo Jia and Nicole felt like this thin blade only two fingers wide and nearly 40 centimeters long was already being held at their throats! It seemed like the slightest movement could slash open their necks.

The mysterious swordsman was probably used to this reaction already. He cleared his throat and declared, “The blade’s name is Severing Moon, and it uses the Severing Moon Blade Technique.

Please guide me!”

Nicole couldn't help but swallow hard at sight of the wide, thin, yet amazingly sharp blade. At closer inspection, the blade was as thin as paper, yet extremely rigid. It wasn't anything like that soft sabre earlier.

The mysterious person gazed at his own Severing Moon Blade and murmured, “I encountered an extremely terrifying swordsman two years ago. Using this wide, fast, and thin blade, he killed countless people.”

That person had been a homicidal maniac. All the people that died in his hands were slashed into pieces by this sharp blade. The authorities had listed him as wanted for a long time, but everyone that attempted to capture him had all been killed by him.

Looking at the Severing Moon Blade with an entranced expression, the mysterious swordsman continued, “Although the blade looks wide and very thin, the palm-wide Ghosthead Blade I had used in battle was instantly sliced into 8 pieces by him!”

The mysterious person raised his right hand as fast as lightning. Immediately...an invisible sword qi wrapped around a large, thick tree about 5 meters away from him, and the tree snapped off at its waist, crashing to the ground with a boom. The incision was as flat and smooth as a mirror.

The mysterious person wiped clean the Severing Moon Blade and said in an infatuated voice, “Once this blade's speed reaches a

certain point, there's nothing that it can't cut. Even a person made of iron would be split apart with a single slash!"

He raised his head to look at Nicole and said, "In order to eliminate the guy, I chased after him for thousands of kilometers into the distant lands. I fought against him 14 times in a row before I finally defeated that homicidal demon. Now I'm using a homicidal demon's dismembering blade technique."

He suddenly stretched out his arm and pointed the Severing Moon Blade at Nicole. "But don't worry, today's just a friendly contest. I won't harm you, so just come at me with all you have!"

"Gulp..." Nicole swallowed hard. She knew the dangers of this fight could possibly far surpass her expectations. Luckily, it was just a friendly match, with only the gold coins as attack targets. Otherwise, nobody would ever want to meet such an opponent.

In order to add another layer of security, Nicole waved the dagger in her hand and said sincerely, "Since this isn't a place we can stay in for long, the battle should have a time limit. However, that condition is up to you to decide!"

The mysterious person didn't suspect anything. After some thinking, he firmly replied, "Fine then. Let's make the limit 5 minutes. If there is still no clear victor and loser after 5 minutes, it'll count as a tie!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia's eyes flashed and he interrupted, "Don't forget, if it's a tie, that means we won't be burdens to you. In other words, if

the result is a tie, you must become our companion.”

The mysterious person was beyond puzzled when he saw how confident Suo Jia and Nicole were. He just really couldn't understand; where did the other party get their self-confidence from? Could it be that...they really had a way to beat him?

The mysterious swordsman didn't bother wasting any more time. He put his effort into gathering his concentration, preparing to face the impending battle. Seeing the mysterious swordsman get into this state, Nicole laughed. With a quick sway of her body, she immediately disappeared in empty air!

“Hmm?!” After witnessing this bizarre scene, the mysterious swordsman looked around in shock. However, he couldn't find any trace of Nicole's figure at all. In that moment, his expression couldn't help but grow hard. If he couldn't even find the enemy, how was he supposed to fight against her? After some contemplation, the mysterious swordsman strained his ears, focusing completely on listening.

Seeing the mysterious swordsman's bewildered and unsure expression, Suo Jia stared blankly at him for a moment before shouting, “Oi! Don't tell me you don't even know of a thief's stealth technique? Not only are they impossible to see with your eyes, your ears can't hear them either.”

“An evasion technique? Interesting. It looks like...I've really underestimated you guys. However...even with this, I can still win!” The mysterious person straightened his back and closed his eyes, doing who knew what.

“Above!” Suo Jia had guessed the mysterious person’s intention from his actions. Although his eyes and ears couldn’t sense Nicole, things like murderous aura, killing intent, and imposing manner were all things that could still be sensed. Of course...that was under the premise that Nicole had to attack.

In order to put more pressure on the mysterious swordsman and force him to make a mistake, Suo Jia shouted out, “Oi! Don’t forget that if it’s a tie, you still have to become our companion!”

The mysterious person’s body wavered. In that instant, a golden glow instantly swept past his chest. Impressively enough, along with the passing light, the gold coin hanging on the mysterious person’s neck also disappeared.

Suo Jia shook his head as he sighed in admiration. Suo Jia really admired Nicole. That golden glow just now had actually been the thieves’ signature skill: Golden Hand. It was actually just a method of stealing. However...a person that was able to successfully master Golden Hand at such a young age was really rare. From this, it could be seen just how much Nicole had suffered the past ten years for the sake of rescuing her siblings. How many crimes had she made!

Thieves pretty much only had stealing skills. The only differences were the objects being stolen. Typically speaking, people that were able to master the Silver Hand before the age of 30 were already considered outstanding geniuses. One typically only mastered Golden Hand after the age of 30. Grasping God Hand after the age of 60 signified reaching the unrivaled realm. It was a

pity that up until now, only 3 people had ever managed to learn God Hand.

Nicole's figure slowly appeared next to Suo Jia. She smugly waved the golden coin in her hand, then turned around to say to the mysterious swordsman, "Haha, the competition has ended. I won!"

The mysterious person stared blankly at the gold coin and said with a stunned expression, "That's impossible. I never felt any killing intent or murderous aura from you. You didn't even have an imposing manner. How exactly did you do it?"

"Huhu..." Smugly raising her chin, Nicole proudly declared, "It doesn't matter how I did it. Either way, I already won. You'd better not be thinking of going back on your word!"

"You won?" The mysterious person looked at Nicole for a remark, and he responded with a smile, "Are you sure you won? If I were you, I'd confirm it first!"

Chapter 282: Who Won, Who Lost? (Part 2)

Nicole was annoyed by the mysterious person's words. She lifted her own gold coin from the front of her chest and said, "Look closely. My gold coin is perfectly..."

Nicole suddenly stopped mid-sentence, and she looked down in shock at the gold coin in her hands, now split into pieces. For a moment, Nicole was completely stunned. What...what exactly was going on here? How had the gold coin suddenly split apart?!

Seeing Nicole's surprised expression, Suo Jia hurriedly rushed over and closely inspected it. The gold coin in her hands had indeed been evenly cut into four pieces. Two cuts, one horizontal and one vertical, had been instantly made without Nicole knowing.

Since it was only two cuts, it didn't seem very fast. However, it couldn't be forgotten that Nicole was a nimble and speed-type thief. Yet the mysterious swordsman's two slashes had managed to hide from both Suo Jia's and Nicole's eyes. From this, the realm that blade's speed had reached could be seen.

What absolutely horrified Suo Jia was how well-grasped the propriety of these two cuts were. They weren't deep nor shallow, and had clearly split apart the coin. Yet the parts hadn't fallen directly to the ground. Only when Nicole had lifted it up did it finally break from the pressure.

Nicole found this unfathomable and stared at the mysterious person blankly. "This isn't possible. Hurry up and tell me, when

did you attack? Why didn't I feel it at all?"

The mysterious swordsman calmly replied, "The first cut was when you reached your hand out to catch me. Back then...your eyes were focused only on the gold coin, so you didn't see my blade slash open your coin under the protection of the gold light!"

After a moment of silence, the mysterious person continued, "As for the second cut, it was after you'd successfully gotten the gold coin and were happily rejoicing. Back then, you were too happy, and completely overlooked my blade."

Nicole blankly turned to look at Suo Jia. Did this count as a win or a loss? Or was it a tie? Nicole personally wasn't able to tell.

Seeing Nicole's vacant expression, the mysterious person laughed and said, "This should count as a tie. After all...neither of you saw my movements, so whatever I say would be useless. Moreover...although I won today's friendly match, that's because of the limits of the location. If I extended the time limit and area, you'd properly use the stealth state while I'd become the most exhausted one. Then when my concentration wasn't together, you'd take advantage of that moment to attack. That means I'd definitely lose."

"Hey!" Suo Jia's eyes suddenly lit up, "You should think it through clearly before you make a judgment. You said before the contest that if it ended in a tie, you'd become our companion. Now...do you still call it a tie?"

Firmly nodding, the mysterious person smiled and said, “That’s right, it’s still a tie. No matter what, I couldn’t protect my own gold coin. According to the rules earlier, since my gold coin is gone, and hers is destroyed, it’s naturally a draw. There would be no point in denying it, even if I wanted to.”

“Yeah!” Nicole excitedly clenched her hands into fists and said, “Mhm, that’s right! We said before the competition that we had to protect our own gold coins. It didn’t matter who was first or last, it would be no good if the gold coin was broken. Hahaha...”

Nicole turned around to look at the mysterious person and loudly declared, “Ok, the competition has already ended. The final result is a tie. In other words, you have to become our companion!”

The mysterious person nodded and said with a warm smile, “If you bet, you must pay. Since it’s a tie, I’ll have to formally join you guys and adventure the Greater Trade Routes together with you for a bit!”

He then paused for a moment before firmly saying, “First, I should give a simple self-introduction. My name is Xiang Yun, a swordsman. I come from a distant ancient country in the East, and am currently traveling everywhere to seek out the experts from various countries all over the world in order to perfect my blade techniques.”

As soon as Xiang Yun finished speaking, Nicole continued, “In that case, I’ll also introduce myself. My name is Nicole, a treasure hunter. I come from Kaya Empire, and am currently following Young Master Suo Jia. We only have one objective—crossing over

the Greater Trade Routes!”

Xiang Yun sighed in praise at Nicole’s words and sincerely said, “Throughout my entire journey, I’ve only ever challenged warriors. This is the first time I’ve ever gone against a treasure hunter. You’re very strong, and will only become stronger in the future. I’m very glad to have a companion like you!”

Nicole couldn’t help but break out into a huge smile at this. At the same time, Xiang Yun turned to look at Suo Jia. He furrowed his brows and said, “Judging from your clothing, you’re one of those mysterious magicians from the Western continent, right?”

“Mag...magician?” Suo Jia’s jaw dropped open in shock. What was that, since when did mages become magicians?

Suo Jia bitterly smiled and replied, “Please, I’m a mage, not a magician. You can’t just mix the two together.”

Xiang Yun scratched his head and awkwardly responded, “Sorry, I’ve never been able to get them straight. In my memories, a magician is fine, a mage is fine, both can throw fireballs, which look pretty nice.”

“What...” Suo Jia helplessly facepalmed. He knew that to the people from the East, his magic was pretty much equivalent to a sideshow of tricks, like spitting fire, changing fire pans, etc. They were all just some showy tricks.

“Alright...” Suddenly dropping his hand from his forehead, Suo Jia said mysteriously, “Xiang Yun, since you said magic is good-looking, how about I give you a magic performance?”

“Yes, of course...” Xiang Yun’s eyes lit up. However, it was clear to see that this guy thought it was just a show, and didn’t really know the difference between magic and tricks yet.

Suo Jia smiled and extended his right hand. A blue glow flashed in his palm before promptly disappearing. He then laughed and said, “Ok, the show has ended. What do you think...are you satisfied with my performance?”

“This...” After stuttering for a long time, Xiang Yun bitterly smiled at Suo Jia, “What is that supposed to be? Honestly speaking, your tricks are the worst I’ve ever seen. A mere flash of blue light is something anyone could do! Moreover, your glow was clearly emitted from your glove. Your tricks are too much of a failure.”

“Wow...” Suo Jia helplessly shook his head. He’d already been completely shot down. Nicole, who’d been watching from the side, cleared it up instead. “Brother Xiang Yun, Young Master Suo Jia’s performance wasn’t the blue light from his hand, but rather healing up your wound.”

“What!” Xiang Yun stared blankly at Nicole for a bit, before hurriedly lowering his head and reaching out to touch his ribs. Just now, his right rib had been struck from his fight against Pico. Although the bone hadn’t actually broken, the slash had left a long and deep wound.

After touching it, Xiang Yun's expression completely changed. From the places he touched, he could tell that the wound was already quickly coming together to heal. This probing was enough for him to tell that the wound had already formed a scab, which he'd even wiped away.

The scab fell away, revealing the smooth flesh underneath. Tentatively pressing down around the area, Xiang Yun found that the wound didn't hurt at all anymore. With just that little effort, such a serious sword wound had been completely healed!

After confirming for a third time that everything wasn't just a hallucination, and verifying that it wasn't just a facade, Xiang Yun finally lifted his head and said while trembling, "Amazing! Really too powerful. With that skill alone, you're already qualified to become my companion. With you here, I never have to worry about getting injured again!"

Chapter 283: Tagan Desert (Part 1)

To Xiang Yun, any wound made it inconvenient for him to skillfully move around for a while. But with Suo Jia's Moisture Technique, his wounds could quickly heal and recover completely. According to the speed just now, a wound could pretty much be entirely healed right after it's inflicted. This meant that Xiang Yun could continue fighting with no restraint, which would also greatly boost his chance of survival.

Seeing how excited Xiang Yun was, Suo Jia could only smile wryly. "Please, this is only the lowest level magic a water mage can do. Actually, as a water mage, I have many skills. You'll gradually realize them later; they'll definitely shock you."

Xiang Yun nodded excitedly and reached out his right hand, "I'm really too honored to be able to have a companion as mystical as you!"

Suo Jia reached his hand out to grasp Xiang Yun's and he calmly replied, "We're also very honored to have a comrade as powerful as you."

"Ok, ok, ok..." Nicole said from the side, "Are you two done yet? Why all the artificial etiquette? I get goosebumps just from watching. I beg of you two to please spare me."

Suo Jia and Xiang Yun rubbed their heads in embarrassment, and exchanged forced smiles. After all, they didn't really know each other well yet, so there was a lot of etiquette that couldn't be

avoided. Otherwise, it was easy to give rise to misunderstandings with their unfamiliarity.

To gloss over the awkwardness, Suo Jia suggested for everyone to speak while walking. As for where they were headed, it was obviously a pub. As men, there was no place more suitable to become acquainted with a new person than a pub was.

After three rounds of wine and dishes of all flavors, everyone gradually became less reserved around each other, and began to laugh and talk. Nicole's laughter in particular hadn't ever ended. Her silver bell-like laughter could be heard even from those on the streets.

Ever since her siblings had been successfully freed by Suo Jia, Nicole seemed to have become an entirely different person. No matter what happened, she'd be exceptionally cheerful. She'd also become less and less formal around Suo Jia, not seeming anything like a captive.

Suo Jia knew that the reason Nicole had gotten more blunt around him was because he'd become like one of her family, which meant there was no need for formalities. It was completely opposite to the behavior of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes, who from beginning to the end, were always so polite. They couldn't possibly be Suo Jia's family.

Nicole cupped her chin with her hands and curiously looked at the bunch of weapons on Xiang Yun's back. "Xiang Yun, why are you carrying so many weapons for no reason? Aren't they heavy?"

Suo Jia subconsciously stopped his own eating. He'd wanted to ask this question a while ago as well, but had felt it too awkward to do so. Seeing as Nicole had gone ahead and asked first, he obviously wanted to listen well.

Suo Jia and Nicole waited. Xiang Yun gently placed his glass down and reminiscently looked out the window at the setting sun and slowly said, "There was a place called Jianghu in my hometown. Our Xiang home was a well-known family of blade-users in Jianghu. With our hegemonic blade techniques passed down for thousands of years, our Xiang family was the most influential family in Jianghu. My father was also the leading figure of the martial arts circle!"

"Wow..." Suo Jia bitterly smiled and said, "Don't tell me...your entire family was trapped in some dark conspiracy plot, so as a result your family became destitute and homeless. Your father also lost his throne as the leader, and only you alone were able to escape. You search for experts everywhere to train your own blade techniques to go back for revenge. Right?"

"Haha..." Xiang Yun shook his head with a smile and replied. "Although that's more or less correct, there are some incorrect details. We weren't framed by any dark conspiracy plots. In reality, my family fell because our Xiang family's hegemonic blade techniques were unraveled. They justly and honorably used their strength to force us to collapse, making our family lose completely!"

"Oh?" Suo Jia looked at Xiang Yun inquisitively and pressed,

“Quick, hurry up and explain further, what exactly happened?”

“Mm...” Xiang Yun nodded and picked up his glass. After taking a light sip of wine, he continued, “My father was the best blade-user in Jianghu. They all gifted him with blades and called him with titles of respect. It could even be said that among the hegemons in this world, nobody was equal to my father.”

Xiang Yun’s expression twisted as he said in a pained voice, “However, suddenly, two great experts appeared in Jianghu one day—Sword Demon and Immortal Evil Blade. They challenged my father one right after the other.” Xiang Yun had an agonized expression on his face, already unable to continue speaking any further.

Xiang Yun suddenly stopped at this crucial point. Suo Jia couldn’t help but anxiously urge him to continue, and Xiang Yun finally gathered the courage to painfully finish, “Is there really any need to speak further? My father lost the two battles in a row. The most influential family, the greatest expert, the best blade-user, number one...all those brilliant lights faded away. Our family’s prestige and status crashed completely, and my father fell into depression.”

“But...” Nicole looked at Xiang Yun in confusion. “You’ve talked all this time, but what does it have to do with your carrying of so many weapons? It seems like your answer’s irrelevant!”

Xiang Yun helplessly looked at Nicole and explained, “I’m just telling you the antecedents. In order to revive my family’s blade techniques, I resolutely left home at the age of 15 to call upon

various experts in all different countries. I only had one goal: Under all costs, I had to use the hegemon blade as a foundation to draw out the strong points of different techniques and combine them into one, creating the most powerful blade, and the number one hegemon of the blades, Xiang Yun!”

Nicole could only sigh as she said bitterly, “Please, can you hurry up and get to the main point? I just want to know why you’re carrying so many weapons! I don’t really care much about your ideals or your aspirations.”

Xiang Yun patted his head and said in embarrassment, “Actually, I have nine blades on me in total. 7 of them are on my back, one is the soft sabre at my waist, and the last one, hehe...aside from me, only dead people have ever witnessed it.”

Xiang Yun paused, and looked straight at Nicole. “These 9 blades all have extensive histories. Each one represents an extremely terrifying blade-user, as well as their blade techniques. Now...I’ve already completely reproduced their skills. I’ve also added my own discoveries and knowledge onto their original foundations, creating nine entirely different blade arts!”

Xiang Yun couldn’t help but grow excited. “These nine blades are all different from each other in shape and characteristics. Each one has special traits that none of the others have. Moreover, this is combined with strange techniques. It can be said that these 9 blades and their respective techniques have already bound together all blades and skills in this world!”

“I see, you came out to target experts in order to perfect those

nine blade skills, right? Suo Jia guessed.

Xiang Yun shook his head, “That’s not all. Actually, the reason for my journey is pretty complicated. I need to search, train, familiarize, master, change, create, and perfect these nine blade techniques, then combine them all into one. This will become the most powerful blade technique, one that only represents me!”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but feel intrigued by Xiang Yun’s words. He pressed, “Currently, we’ve already seen your Half Moon, Aqua Moon, and Severing Moon Blade Techniques. What...are the other 6?”

Xiang Yun didn’t bother keeping it a secret. He smiled and answered, “At the moment, the nine I have are Waning Moon, Aqua Moon, Severing Moon, Half Moon, Full Moon, Chasm Moon, Glittering Moon, Cold Moon, and Pursuing Moon. The final objective is to use the dominant blade technique as a base and combine these nine arts together, reconstructing a hegemonic blade technique that is unrivaled in this world!”

“Great!” Suo Jia immediately applauded upon hearing Xiang Yun’s grand dreams. His eyes glowed as he looked at Xiang Yun, and he firmly declared, “To be unrivaled under the heavens, to have such an overpowering blade technique...don’t worry, we’ll definitely help you to the best of our abilities and make your dreams come true. You’ll remake the hegemonic blade technique and become the most powerful blade-user in the world!”

Seeing the two males speak such hot-blooded words, Nicole refused to remain left out. She added on, “I will also revitalize my

family's fame as well to become the strongest treasure hunter in the world!"

Nicole glanced at Suo Jia and said, "Also you, since your comrades all have such great ambitions, you can't fall behind either. If you don't become the world's number one mage, we won't recognize you as our companion!"

Suo Jia and Xiang Yun exchanged a glance...and then they simultaneously threw their heads back and laughed heartily. Although Nicole's words sounded childish, Suo Jia and Xiang Yun had already firmly established this seeming impossible goal as their ambition.

"Oi!" Seeing that neither of the two males continued speaking, Nicole turned around and spoke to Xiang Yun, "You're not a girl, why leave your hair so long? Moreover, it covers your face. Your face can't be unfit to be seen, right?"

Suo Jia couldn't help but gasp sharply. These words were too rude. If everything was fine, then it wasn't a problem. But if Xiang Yun's face was actually one that couldn't be exposed...

*

TL Note: So...I'm sure some of you know this, but I absolutely hate naming things. So when the nine blades suddenly appeared out of nowhere with no descriptions for most of them, I SOSed Deceptioning for help, and well...our conversation went like this... and in the end I made up some names >.>

Chapter 284: Tagan Desert (Part 2)

While Suo Jia was growing concerned, Nicole seemed to have realized this problem too. She chuckled and added, “Men don’t rely on their faces to earn money for food. As long as they’re skilled, it doesn’t matter how they look! You have to be courageous enough about your own deficiencies!” Nicole reached out and comfortingly patted Xiang Yun’s shoulder.

Seeing Nicole’s cute actions, the corners of Xiang Yun’s mouth twitched upwards, and he said awkwardly, “That...a long time ago, when I was young, my mom had always taken care of me. Now that I’m traveling alone, I had forgotten about things like washing clothes and fixing my hair that I don’t have any experience in because I was too focused on my objective.”

Xiang Yun reached up to split apart the long hair covering his forehead. In that moment...a handsome face appeared before Suo Jia and Nicole.

Strictly speaking, Xiang Yun definitely counted as a handsome person. He had a tall and straight nose, resolute mouth, and eyes bright and full with expression. There weren’t any defects on his face like Suo Jia and Nicole had been worrying about.

However, from Suo Jia’s and Nicole’s points of view, while Xiang Yun couldn’t be called ugly, he wasn’t that handsome either. While looking at Xiang Yun’s face, Suo Jia suddenly realized that they weren’t even the same race.

Suo Jia's eyes were azure like sapphires, and his hair was also a light blue color. Nicole had golden hair and eyes, her skin as white as milk. However, Xiang Yun had shiny, jet-black hair, and large, bright eyes that seemed to glitter like black gems.

Xiang Yun's skin was a healthy copper color. However Nicole's was as white as snow, like a piece of paper. Suo Jia's, on the other hand, was definitely not white; it appeared to be a very pale yellow. However, compared to Xiang Yun, Suo Jia was definitely still very pale.

After staring at Xiang Yun for a long time, Suo Jia finally asked, "Xiang Yun, don't you find your long hair suffocating? And it must be annoying to wash as well. Plus, doesn't your long hair get in the way of your eyes when you fight?"

"That..." Xiang Yun subconsciously touched his hair and replied in embarrassment, "I also have no desire to keep it this long. But since coming here, I haven't been able to find any barber shop. Truthfully speaking, it's already been over three months since I last cut my hair!"

"Cutting your hair!" Nicole's eyes suddenly lit up, and she quickly stood up. "Cutting hair is very simple; I can do it. How about it? Want the awesome me to help you?"

Xiang Yun awkwardly looked at Nicole for a bit before hesitantly replying, "That's not the best, right? Since males and females are different, they shouldn't have direct contact between each other. Although I really want to get my hair cut, I have a fiancée whom I really love."

“Seriously...” Nicole closed her eyes in exasperation and groaned, “You, seriously, what goes through your brain? I’m just helping you cut your hair, not like we’re doing anything else. Moreover, what do you mean by no direct contact between males and females? You’re really such a strange person.”

Nicole stood up and walked to Xiang Yun’s side. After circling around him once, she pulled out a dagger and chuckled, “Alright, just obediently sit there and let me fix your hair. Don’t worry, my skills are amazing!”

Nicole quickly lifted up Xiang Yun’s hair. She brandished the sharp dagger in her hand, and the shiny strands of the jet-black hair fell to the ground one after another.

“Successfully accomplished!” Nicole excitedly declared to Xiang Yun, who was stiffly sitting there like a rod, and she proudly dusted off her hands and re-sheathed the dagger at her waist.

“That...” Nicole had completely messed up Xiang Yun’s hair, it was now a horrible sight. When Suo Jia finally realized this, he said, “Nicole, how come when I look at his hair, the left side is longer and the right side is shorter!”

“Oh! Really?” Nicole turned around to face Xiang Yun face-to-face in confusion. After closer inspection, she cried out in shock, “Aiya...how did it end up like this! Let me trim it again, it’ll be fixed immediately!”

Half an hour later...

After Nicole had trimmed it for the eighth time, she finally clapped the tool in her hand and looked at Suo Jia to say with a provoking tone, “How about it? You can’t say anything about it now. Let me tell you, I’ve walked all over the world, and I’ve never seen anyone as good at handling things as I am!”

“Tch...” Suo Jia snorted in disdain and said in a low voice, “What is that! Only 1 inch of the hair is left. Any shorter, and he’d be bald. That’s something anyone can do!”

Suo Jia looked over at Xiang Yun. To be honest, now that his previously long black hair had been pulled upright on his head, it looked both sharp and full of vitality. He looked much more valiant than before!

Xiang Yun finally relaxed his body after Nicole had finally left. This was something that really only he could do. If it were Suo Jia, sitting completely motionless for over 30 minutes would’ve long since made his entire body sore. However, there wasn’t a single bead of sweat to be seen on him!

Nicole didn’t seem to have gotten tired of it yet. She slyly looked at Suo Jia and smiled, “Um...Young Master Suo Jia, your hair looks like it should be cut soon too. Isn’t keeping such long hair annoying? Just washing it sounds like a difficult task.”

“I’m good!” Suo Jia tentatively raised his hands and said with a forced smile, “I don’t need to get my hair cut. I like long hair, and

washing it isn't annoying. Don't forget, I'm a water mage. How could I not even be able to wash hair? It seems to me that there's no reason to inconvenience you anymore, you should just rest."

"Oh..." Nicole gloomily pouted could only obediently sit back on her chair. Seeing this, Suo Jia finally let out a breath of relief. At the same time, Xiang Yun was looking at a mirror on the opposite wall, satisfyingly inspecting his new hair.

"Mmmm..." Xiang Yun sighed in praise, "This style is really awesome. It's both sharp and full of vitality. Moreover, it won't get in the way when fighting. Why hadn't I thought of this before? This kind of hairstyle is something I can do myself too!"

Xiang Yun returned to his seat and sincerely thanked Nicole, making her so happy that she couldn't suppress her wide smile. Afterwards...the banquet continued up until they were completely full, leaning lazily back into their chairs. They then began to discuss their next step.

Seeing how Nicole was starting to get sleepy from the food, Suo Jia sternly said, "Alright, now that we've finished eating and drunk enough wine, we need to discuss our next course of action!"

Struggling to gather her concentration, Nicole stood ramrod-straight in her chair and said, "Next, we'll leave Banja and head south. After passing through four countries, we'll reach Falan Empire. We can replenish supplies there, then continue onwards south to arrive at Tagan Desert. If we find Loze Oasis, we'll have reached the entrance of the Greater Trade Routes!"

“Heavens!” Xiang Yun cried out in astonishment, “There’s still such a long journey ahead?! This is really too shocking. If one didn’t have a guide, where are they supposed to go search? But really, entering Tagan Desert and finding the Loze Oasis within it isn’t something that amateurs could do. They probably wouldn’t even know how they died.”

“Hehe...” Nicole smugly made a V sign with her fingers and proudly stated, “Correct. In reality, there isn’t a single adventure group that can pass through the Greater Trade Routes without guidance. They can’t even possibly know where the Greater Trade Routes are located.”

“Ok!” Suo Jia stood up and declared in a serious tone, “We don’t have any time to waste. Since we’ve already decided on our trajectory, we should go and prepare in advance. Tomorrow morning, we’ll officially head out. The objective is the Greater Trade Routes’ starting point: Loze Oasis!”

Suo Jia left the room first. Since they were traveling for a long distance, there were many things that needed to be prepared, like food, water, sleeping tents, and everyday items. Once they left the city, who knew when the next time they would be able to encounter another city. After all...their goal was the Greater Trade Routes!

Chapter 285: Unexpected Change (Part 1)

Journeying outside for a long period of time is something people that stay at home all the day can't possibly imagine. One must personally experience the hardships and torments to understand.

It was evening, a month after they'd left Banja. Nicole, Suo Jia, and Xiang Yun were all sitting around a bonfire. They all looked at the large piece of meat in the bowl with tearless sorrowful expressions.

For the entire month, everyone's meals had been solely comprised of magical beast meat that they had hunted, with the exception of the rations that Suo Jia had brought. That meant they'd only had meat and dry rations for the whole time. At this point, they'd find even delicious things hard to swallow.

When Nicole looked at the large chunk of meat and the thick and long shreds of meat on top of it, her stomach seemed to swell and her throat blocked up. Her heart was itching her to spit it back out. She tried many times to eat it, but every time she brought the fragrant piece of meat to her mouth, she wasn't be able to swallow it.

"Tch..." Xiang Yun looked at Nicole in disdain and brazenly said, "Women are really just women. How could going out on a journey be easy? For the sake of your health, you have to eat!" Xiang Yun abruptly clamped onto a large piece of meat and tightly closed his eyes, quickly stuffing it into his mouth.

Five minutes later...

Xiang Yun was still chewing that piece of lean meat. Nicole laughed at Xiang Yun's pained look and said, "Aiya...what's wrong with our noble swordsman Xiang? Does a single bite of meat require chewing for five minutes? Could it be that...our noble swordsman Xiang has grown old?"

"Pft!" Xiang Yun darkly spat out the meat in his mouth onto the ground, and growled in annoyance, "***, do you think I don't want to swallow it? But my throat gets terribly blocked up. Even after using all my energy, I can't force myself to swallow it down!"

Suo Jia couldn't help but sigh. He dumped out the meat in his bowl and helplessly said, "Forget it, don't bother eating this. It looks like...if we don't starve for an entire day, we won't be able to eat this stuff at all!"

"No!" Nicole raised her hand to object, "Even if you starved me for a week, I definitely wouldn't be able to swallow it, let alone after a day. We've really eaten it too much. I beg you, I want to eat a feast, I want to eat stir-fried dishes, or Western food!"

Suo Jia could only reply, "Do you think you're the only one that feels that way? We also want to eat it. But the question is, among the three of us, can anyone cook?"

"That..." Xiang Yun scratched his head, and said in embarrassment, "My mother had taken care of me since I was young, so I can't cook. Moreover, we have customs over there;

men aren't to enter a kitchen. After all, a nobleman who has seen a living animal cannot bear to see it die."

Xiang Yun turned to look at Nicole and asked in confusion, "Theoretically speaking, shouldn't you, a girl, be able to cook?"

"Me!" Nicole pouted gloomily and innocently replied, "I've already told both of you about my situation. Since I first became independent, I'd been going out to steal things in order to save my siblings. Where would I have gotten the time to learn how to cook!"

Nicole and Xiang Yun uniformly shifted their gazes towards Suo Jia. Meeting their expectant gazes, Suo Jia only coughed and said, "Sorry, I'm a training maniac, so I spend all my time on training. Don't count on me."

"Heavens!" Nicole gave a long sigh of grief and tightly clutched the metal plate in her hands. As she looked at the large chunk of beef on it, she lamented, "Beloved Mister Suo Jia, don't tell me that...you want us to journey on the Greater Trade Routes with you without even eating properly? That's signing a death wish! Before the enemy even kills us, we'll die from poor health!"

"No way!" Xiang Yun looked at Nicole in bewilderment and argued, "This time was just poor planning on our part. If we'd planned to head towards a city when we first setted off, then we would've been able to bring enough food for several days, and thus rush to the next city."

Nicole rolled her eyes in exasperation and replied in frustration, “In your dreams. What do you think the Greater Trade Routes are? Going a month without seeing any trace of human habitation there is normal. Where do you expect us to find food to eat?”

“Mmm...” Suo Jia nodded in agreement and solemnly added, “If the Greater Trade Routes had a dense population, then it wouldn’t be the Greater Trade Routes. I researched before coming here; it’s a vast but sparsely populated place, without any proper supply points.”

Xiang Yun looked at Suo Jia and Nicole in shock and said, “If that’s truly the case, then how do other groups do it? Don’t tell me that they don’t need to eat?”

Nicole looked at Xiang Yun and weakly replied, “Other groups always have at least one person that can cook, unlike us who don’t have a single member able to do that.”

“That...” Xiang Yun stood up and anxiously paced back and forth as he murmured, “This won’t do. If we don’t eat properly, how will we have the strength or energy to display our true might? Food is a primary need. We have to quickly think of a solution.”

Seeing Xiang Yun aimlessly wander around like a headless fly, Suo Jia calmly said, “It’s not really complicated. The next time we’re at a large city, we’ll just look for a companion that can cook.”

“Hmm?!” Xiang Yun and Nicole cried out in astonishment. When

they thought it over more closely, they realized that Suo Jia was right! The two simultaneously agreed to Suo Jia's suggestions.

During the following several days, the three of them quickly rushed along their journey. They passed through a dozen cities, but weren't able to find a comrade that could cook and rush through the Greater Trade Routes with them.

The Greater Trade Routes wasn't a place that just anyone could go to. It was possible to meet danger at any moment. Any normal person would die the moment they weren't paying attention, no matter how powerful their companions were.

However, their efforts couldn't count as being wasted either. Although they were temporarily unable to find any suitable companions, Suo Jia had already managed to catch word on where to find a person that could meet these requirements.

According to the information they'd gotten along the way, there was a descendent of the Aili clan in Majara Empire. Although she was currently just a slave, her dishes were extremely delicious. Moreover, her original strength was quite formidable, so she fulfilled all the requirements Suo Jia was looking for.

Since they'd already received this information, the three of them obviously didn't waste any time. They advanced as quickly as possible, turning around back where they had come from and traveled a thousand kilometers. With this, they finally reached Majara Empire's capital: Mara!

After resting for a night, the two went out the next morning to search around. Soon...they managed to gather the bits of information together, and determined the location of Aili clan's descendent.

Lauren Aili was a descendent of the Aili clan, which was an ancient, influential family that passed down trades like cooking and footwork. However...for some reason, the Aili clan seemed to have provoked some figure they shouldn't have, which led to the destruction of the family. All of the clan members had become slaves.

The Aili Clan wasn't actually from Majara Empire. The reason Lauren Aili was here was precisely because of her cooking skills. It was said that any dish produced by the Aili Clan could even make blind people see again.

Lauren Aili was over 50 years old this year. At the moment...she was within the Majara Imperial Palace as the chef for the Majara Emperor. She was only responsible for the regular meals of the Emperor alone. According to the received information, the Majara Emperor never ate any food made by any other person after inviting Lauren Aili to his palace.

The three people couldn't help but furrow their brows after compiling the information. Although Lauren Aili was a slave...it was too annoying that she'd fallen into the Imperial Palace's hands. It wasn't like the Imperial family lacked money, power, or treasures; in fact, they had piles of such things. In that case, what were the three of them supposed to use to persuade the opposing party to give up his personal chef?

The most headache-inducing thing was that according to the information, Lauren Aili seemed to be living quite well. She had a good relationship with the Emperor. Although she was a slave, her status was even higher than that of an aristocrat. Even if the Emperor was willing to release her, would she be willing to accompany Suo Jia's group to the Greater Trade Routes? One couldn't forget that she was already over 50 years old!

Although the difficulties were endless, and all the reports pointed to Lauren Aili most likely being unwilling to leave with them, they'd already arrived at this point. If they didn't try, they wouldn't drop the matter.

After properly preparing the gift, Suo Jia's group advanced towards the palace and requested to meet with the Majara Emperor. Unfortunately for them, wanting to meet with the Emperor with the status of commoners was too difficult. The guards weren't even willing to notify the Emperor. Thus, the three could only reluctantly go back to their hotel and think of another way.

Chapter 286: Unexpected Change (Part 2)

Effort doesn't turn back on resolute people. After a long while... Suo Jia heard that Chef Lauren was a very dedicated chef that would personally go buy groceries at the market every day. She would gather all her ingredients outside every morning at 6am.

Suo Jia's group was overjoyed at the news, and they prepared to stop Lauren Aili. As long as they could persuade her to join them as a technical expert, they wouldn't have any problems.

The next morning, the three of them rushed outside to the market entrance to wait. Not long afterwards, Nicole lightly nudged Suo Jia and whispered, "Quick, look over there! She's arrived..."

Suo Jia and Xiang Yun hurriedly concentrated and looked in the direction Nicole was pointing towards. They noticed a middle-aged woman wearing plain and simple clothes, slowly entering the market while accompanied by six imperial bodyguards.

After silently organizing the words he planned to say, Suo Jia strode over to meet Lauren. As for Nicole and Xiang Yun, they stayed in their original spots. To avoid scaring off the other party, it was best not to all go at once.

Xiang Yun and Nicole watched as Suo Jia walked straight up to Lauren and smiled. "You must be Miss Lauren Aili, right?"

When Suo Jia first blocked their path, Lauren Aili started. But

she soon recovered her calm. At the same time, three of the six bodyguards behind her held Suo Jia back and said forcefully, “Lady Lauren is currently gathering ingredients. Nobody is to interrupt her. Those that agitate Lady Lauren....are to be executed!”

Despite the bodyguard’s threat, Suo Jia maintained his smile, and didn’t move at all. There’s no way he would pay any mind to these mere bodyguards. A single Diamond Charge would be enough to crush these guys into pulp!

Suo Jia looked straight past the bodyguards and said to Lauren, “I’ve come from the distant Holy Light Empire specifically to meet with Miss Lauren. I’d like to exchange some words for you; can you please give me a few minutes of your time?”

Lauren seemed to be astonished by this. After some thinking, she softly said, “You three, step down!”

Against Suo Jia’s expectations, the three bodyguards respectfully obeyed Lauren’s commands, and retreated behind her! He looked at Lauren in bewilderment, and then back at the six bodyguards behind her. Weren’t they...supposed to be watching over her?

Suo Jia stepped forward a few steps and stopped before Lauren. “Miss Lauren, I’ll get straight to the point. I’m from Holy Light Empire, and I’ve come today to invite you to become our companion in adventuring through the Greater Trade Routes. Would Miss Lauren be willing to accept?”

“Haha...” With a gentle laugh, Lauren shook her head and said,

“That won’t do, young friend. I have such a weary old body now, and am no longer suited to go out traveling. I think...”

Seeing that Lauren seemed about to reject, Suo Jia couldn’t help but grow vexed. He anxiously interrupted Lauren’s words, “I know, it must be due to the slave necklace. Don’t worry, I can...”

Without waiting for Suo Jia to finish speaking, Lauren stretched out her hand to stop Suo Jia and smiled as she pulled down the collar of her clothes. With a smile, she said, “Look, I don’t have a slave necklace. The reason I stay here is truly because I don’t want to leave. I’m already old, and I really can’t go adventuring anymore.”

She then chuckled and continued, “I’m doing very well right now. His Majesty also treats me very well. Right now...my entire family lives here. I can’t possibly leave them. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but sharply gasp at Lauren’s words. It looked like this Majara Emperor really couldn’t leave this chef. In order for her to live her life nicely, he’d even bought her entire family. Moreover, he’d released them from their slave necklaces. It looked like...their operation this time had been wasted.

Suo Jia probed around a bit more. From their conversation, Suo Jia learned that Lauren was very happy with her current life. The Emperor treated both her and her family very well, and they had only been able to reunite because the Emperor had used a large amount of money to purchase them all. She no longer wanted to be split apart from them. Moreover...she had to repay the Emperor’s

benevolence, so she definitely wouldn't leave.

Unable to force her, Suo Jia could only leave. If Lauren had been in a difficult situation, perhaps he would've been able to think of a solution. However, the problem was that she didn't have any challenges right now; she simply was unwilling to leave. There was nothing Suo Jia could do.

Suo Jia reunited again with Xiang Yun and Nicole, and the three of them dejectedly left the city. After replenishing their supplies within the city, they left Majara Empire the next morning. As for a chef, they could only continue trying to gather information.

Night slowly approached. After traveling for the entire day, the three people were currently sitting around a bonfire, all of them in a blank daze. Since they hadn't been able to invite a chef, they were all in pretty low spirits. None of them felt like talking.

"Hmm?" Xiang Yun body suddenly went rigid. He looked around in alarm, having seemingly noticed something.

Suo Jia looked at Xiang Yun in bewilderment and asked, "What happened, Xiang Yun? Is there something wrong?"

Xiang Yun gravely knit his brows together and nodded, "Yes. Just now, I seemed to have heard some sound of activity. But when I tried to focus on it more, it disappeared!"

Suo Jia sighed and didn't pay any mind to it. "It's fine, it's

probably some passersby. They wouldn't have any hostility towards us anyways. Otherwise, I would've definitely sensed them."

As soon as Suo Jia finished speaking, Xiang Yun suddenly turned his head and said to a nearby tree, "Friend, since you've come, there's no need to hide. Come on out!"

Following Xiang Yun's voice, a blue and black figure suddenly jumped up from the large tree. Like a flash of lightning, the figure covered several meters, and borrowing power from another large tree, the body soared across the air and swooped back down.

"Bring it on!" A murderous aura seemed to flash across Xiang Yun's face. Without saying a word, he gave a loud bellow, and directly reached towards his back with his right hand. In an instant...a large, shoulders-broad blade appeared in Xiang Yun's hands.

Xiang Yun faced the enemy currently jumping down from the sky, and sent out dozens of slashes. However, the other party showed no signs of fighting back. The blue and black figure spiraled around in the air like a dragon. His legs split apart as his two feet came blasting down at Xiang Yun like a tempest.

"Clang! Clang! Clang..." In a mere instant, the wide, shoulders-broad battle blade exchanged attacks with the other party at least a dozen times. Neither side held back much, and neither of them really suffered anything.

However, the opposite party was in midair after all, and had nothing to borrow power from. After a long period of fighting, he'd naturally be the one at a disadvantage. The figure realized this point and suddenly jumped off Xiang Yun's blade, his body soaring through the air in a backward flip before lightly landing on the ground five meters away.

The mysterious guest proudly straightened his body with his hands in his pockets, seemingly about to say something. But just then, the battle-addicted Xiang Yun completely ignored this, and brandished the Chasm Moon Blade, causing attacks to surge over like a strong tide.

No person could possibly remain unconcerned when confronted against Xiang Yun's attacks. Seeing the heavy, cold waves of attack from the blade, the mysterious guest suddenly flipped upside down. With his palms on the ground, his feet split apart as his body spun like a whirlwind. With the impetus from his legs, the mysterious guest's feet welcomed Xiang Yun like a hurricane.

"Clang! Clang! Clang..." Fierce sounds of collision rang out as the mysterious guest's feet came into contact with Xiang Yun a dozen times. Afterwards...his body straightened up, and his feet danced in the breeze like flowers. In an instant, layers of footprints covered Xiang Yun's body, forcing him backwards.

After staggering back a few steps, Xiang Yun grit his teeth and let out a yell. Rather than retreating, he advanced. He raised the large, broad blade over his head, and with a flash of yellow light, it came down at the mysterious guest with a world-shaking slash!

Chapter 287: City Of Freedom (Part 1)

The mysterious guest first froze a bit after seeing Xiang Yun's mighty blade. With no better option, the person's body whirled around lightning fast, as his right leg filled with a shocking amount of energy that flashed a brilliant red. In an instant, the yellow glowing blade and the red glowing foot charged at each other.

“Freeze!” An earth-shaking shout rang through the air after seeing the two people about to clash. The next instant...the fierce sound of an explosion, followed by a violent ball of light, shook the earth.

“F*ck!” Suo Jia lowly cursed. He didn't dare waste any time, and hurriedly rushed towards the fight. As he neared, Suo Jia saw exactly what he'd expected; Xiang Yun and that mysterious guest had been miserably sent flying out dozens of meters by each other's energies, and collapsed on the ground. Although judging from their outer appearance, the two seemed as intact as they'd been at the start, one could tell from the trace of blood trickling down the corner of their mouths and their green complexions that they'd both suffered heavy internal injuries.

Suo Jia quickly waved his right hand, casting two Moisture Techniques in succession at both Xiang Yun and the mysterious guest. Seeing this, Nicole cried out in shock from behind him, “Heavens! Are you stupid? We just managed to defeat that guy, yet you assisted him!”

Suo Jia bitterly laughed, and didn't pay any mind to Nicole. He

turned to say to Xiang Yun and the mysterious guest, “You guys are like fighting cocks, so belligerent! If I hadn’t shouted then, you guys probably would’ve ended in mutual destruction.”

Seeing that Suo Jia was yelling at the mysterious guest as well, Xiang Yun realized that Suo Jia seemed to recognize the guy. Xiang Yun looked at Suo Jia with uncertainty, then looked back at the fellow, who was in an equally miserable state as him. He then asked, “Suo Jia, this guy is...”

Suo Jia bitterly laughed and shook his head. He then turned around to walk to the bonfire, and without turning back around, called out, “Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole, all three of you come over here.”

Hearing this, Nicole and Xiang Yun could immediately confirm that Suo Jia was indeed acquainted with this fellow. If he even knew the mysterious person’s name, how could they not know each other? Xiang Yun went over to support Roger, and the two walked over to the bonfire.

After they’d all sat around the fire, Suo Jia said to the mysterious guest, “Roger, didn’t you go out to look for your family members? Why did you run over here? This place is thousands of kilometers away from Holy Light Empire!”

Before Roger could even respond, Nicole nudged Suo Jia’s arm and said, “Hey! Don’t just pretend we aren’t here, introduce us first!”

“Oh!” Suo Jia patted his head and said, “This fellow is my friend from back at Dawn City.”

Suo Jia turned around and said to Nicole, “You’ve also been to Dawn City before. This guy is the leader of the 100,000 slave soldiers. Hehe...but after I took over, I dragged them out and restored their freedom. Right now...he’s the vice-commander of the Dark Angels thief group!”

Once Nicole heard that he was a friend from the thief realm, Nicole immediately perked up and excitedly said, “You’re pretty amazing, to become a leader at such a young age. Who’s your commander?”

“Eh!” Roger blankly stared at her, and looked at Suo Jia, before looking back at Nicole. He then said in bewilderment, “Our commander is Young Master Suo Jia. You didn’t know this?”

“Pa!” Nicole facepalmed and chuckled, “Hehe...after being with Suo Jia for so long, I’d already forgotten how mighty he had been. Hehe...it’s a small mistake on my part.”

“Oh!” Xiang Yun asked curiously, “What? Suo Jia was pretty mighty before?”

Nicole stuck out her hip and replied, “What are you talking about? What’s pretty mighty supposed to mean? He’s quite mighty!”

Nicole rolled her sleeves, seemingly about to thoroughly explain to Xiang Yun her family background. Seeing this, Suo Jia shook his head and said, “Forget it, that’s all the past. The current me is just an ordinary person.”

Suo Jia eyes gradually lit up as he said, “If I, Suo Jia, was a very mighty person, then it would be something that’d happen after we pass through the Greater Trade Routes. That level of greatness is what I desire the most!”

“No, no, no...” Xiang Yun was clearly dissatisfied with Suo Jia’s words. He furiously shook his head and argued, “Crossing it alone isn’t anything big, it’s not like it’s mountains of daggers and seas of flames. Only by trying to proclaim yourself as the hegemon of the Greater Trade Routes will it be challenging. I won’t bother with anything else!”

“Heavens!” Hearing Xiang Yun’s delusional speech, Roger gasped, “Boss, you can’t actually be heading towards the Greater Trade Routes!”

Suo Jia gave at Roger a bewildered gaze and said, “Of course I’m actually going, why would it be fake! That’s right...you still haven’t answered me. Why did you run all the way here? And you just happened to bump into me. Don’t try to tell me it was just a coincidence!”

“Hehe...” Roger smiled and explained, “Didn’t you go to search for my mother this morning? My mother came back and told me. After hearing her description of you, I immediately recognized who you were!”

Suo Jia stared at Roger in utter confusion. After a long time...Suo Jia's body shook, and he cried out in shock, "God! Don't tell me that Lauren Aili is your mother!"

Roger wordlessly stared at Suo Jia for a bit, not sure whether to laugh or cry. "We're all part of the Aili Clan. Don't tell me you didn't know that my name was Roger Aili?"

"Then you can cook?" This question was Nicole's first reaction to this information.

Roger looked at her in confusion and nodded, "Yea, of course I can. Cooking is something that's passed down through our family. Anyone from my family, regardless of male or female, all have to learn and master it!"

Roger proudly pointed at himself with his thumb and declared, "This isn't just me bragging, but my cooking isn't just "high level". Even my mother admits that I'm a cooking genius that far surpasses her!"

"Yahoo!" Nicole jumped up in delight and cried out joyously, "Now, the difficult problem is finally solved. I don't have to eat meat every day any longer!"

Suo Jia couldn't help but sweat drop. What kind of statement was that? ...Was eating meat every day really that hellish of a lifestyle? But when he thought it through again, this really did seem to be the case.

Xiang Yun nodded and said, “Mmm...that’s indeed not bad. You can both cook and fight. Although your strength is just the slightest bit less than mine, that’s already enough.”

“What!” Roger abruptly stood up and glared at Xiang Yun in anger. “Short haired guy, who did you say was slightly weaker than you? The fight just now didn’t actually have an outcome. Let’s go again!”

“Hm?” Xiang Yun furrowed his brows, and like a fighting cock ready for a fight, he slowly stood up and said, “If you want to go at it, then let’s go. Do you think I’m scared of you? This time, I’ll definitely defeat you!”

“Aha!” Roger threw his head back and laughed as he shook his head, “You took the words right out of my mouth. I’m not looking down on you or anything, but you’re still too early to defeat me!”

After just this short exchange, Xiang Yun immediately pulled out his sabre and began to fight with Roger. The resonant sounds of collisions rang through the air as the two began to travel further and further away while fighting. In just a moment, the two of them had disappeared from Suo Jia’s and Nicole’s sights.

Suo Jia stared dumbfoundedly towards the direction they’d disappeared in, and couldn’t help but laugh dryly. Xiang Yun’s belligerence was something he’d been born with; if he didn’t fight, he couldn’t live. But Roger’s love for fighting was related to his dignity as a man.

Although Roger had been a slave for a long time, he'd been the strongest one amongst the 100,000 slave soldiers. No ordinary person could possibly make so many criminals concede to him. It could be said that Roger had never obeyed anyone; aside from owing Suo Jia a favor, he didn't give a damn about anyone else.

While Suo Jia was standing in a daze, Nicole indifferently said, "Suo Jia, there's no need to bother with them, just let them fight. Everyone's already companions with each other, and I'm sure they know this too. Nothing big can come out of it. At most...you'll have to heal them properly when they return."

While neither Suo Jia nor Nicole completely understood the two guys' strengths, they seemed more or less evenly matched in fighting prowess. Even if there was a difference between them, it wasn't something that could be determined in a short amount of time. But to their surprise, Roger and Xiang Yun soon began walking back, one behind the other.

Nicole looked at them incredulously and cried out, "God! You guys were actually able to determine the victor and loser so soon? Quick...tell me, who exactly won?!"

Chapter 288: City Of Freedom (Part 2)

Xiang Yun proudly patted his chest and smugly declared, “Does that even need to be asked? Of course I won. Did you think there was any other possibility?”

“Tch...” Roger tsked in disdain and angrily retorted, “You really feel no shame. If it wasn’t for your sabre being so sharp that it split apart my combat boots, how would I lose to you?”

Xiang Yun didn’t even bother looking at Roger, and he coldly replied, “Weapons are extensions of one’s body. Now that your weapon is broken, you have naturally lost to me. If this was the battlefield, you would’ve already become a corpse.”

Roger hatefully gnashed his teeth, but he was unable to refute Xiang Yun’s words. After all, they were correct; in reality, Roger had indeed lost today, even if it was because his shoes had broken.

Suo Jia looked down at Roger’s feet. At the moment...his two, hard leather combat boots sported multiple gashes from Xiang Yun’s sharp sabre. Moreover...the bottom of the shoes had also been slashed into a mess. If Xiang Yun had wanted to, Roger’s feet would’ve been cut off.

Seeing Roger’s unhappy mood, Suo Jia stood up with a smile and said, “Let me speak from a fair standpoint. Xiang Yun did indeed win today’s fight. Although it’s because Roger’s shoes weren’t good enough, fights are just like that. There’s never a truly “fair” course of events!”

Xiang Yun nodded and added, “That’s right. No matter what, today was my victory. However...this is just the first fight. Once you find a better pair of combat boots, I’ll just fight you again.”

“Mmm...” Suo Jia nodded in agreement and smiled, “That’s right, I meant that as well. Xiang Yun may not know this well, but Roger was a slave for many years. He was only just released recently, so he doesn’t really have any better equipment or weapons. That’s why...there’s no way he can go against your war blades. However...”

Suo Jia turned to look at Roger and said encouragingly, “Don’t worry. Since you’re going to join our group, your equipment won’t be a problem. I’ll naturally resolve that issue for you. Just tell me what you want!”

“Really!” Roger excitedly jumped up from the ground, his hands clenched into fists. “Boss Suo Jia, will you really get me a good set of equipment?”

Suo Jia nodded and firmly stated, “I’ve never gone back on my words. Tell me, exactly what do you need?”

“Hmm...” After thinking about it for a bit, Roger quickly replied, “I just need a pair of legguards and combat boots. The legguards needs to be made of durable yet soft leather. It’s best if the combat boots are able to resist any type of precious or sharp blades...I use my legs and feet as weapons, after all.”

“Mmm?!” Nicole exclaimed in shock from the sidelines and curiously asked Roger, “You only want a pair of trousers and boots? What about armor? A cloak? And handguards, belts, etc. You don’t need any of them?”

“Hehe...” Roger sharply and nimbly kicked his feet and said, “My body’s abilities are all in my legs and feet. There’s no need to protect or give weapons to any other part.”

“That...” Suo Jia looked at Roger in surprise and asked, “Why don’t you use dual hand combat? Although your leg attacks are very sharp, they aren’t as agile as your hands. No matter what, getting at least a dagger as a supplement would be better than going empty-handed!”

Nicole and Xiang Yun both nodded in agreement, then looked expectantly at Roger. Everyone watched as Roger chuckled, “You guys should also know that my family is comprised of chefs. As such, we cannot get our hands dirty. Think about it, if I just smashed an enemy’s head open, and then steamed buns for you guys with my hands covered in brain juices, would you be able to eat it?”

“Uh...” Everyone was at a loss of words. At the same time, Roger continued, “Chefs can only use their feet to fight, and their hands to cook. That’s why...no matter what, the food my family makes is always the cleanest. You can all relax and eat it heartily!”

“Yea!” Nicole excitedly pumped a fist and sighed in appreciation, “This is really the best. You’re very right, as a chef, your hands must be clean. Based on this point alone, your family is definitely a

hundred times more amazing than all those other great chefs out there!”

Suo Jia thoughtfully looked at Roger. After a while, he resolutely declared, “Alright. In that case, let’s rest up early, and rush over to the next city tomorrow. There, I can collect some materials, and then personally make you a pair of combat boots!”

“Huh?” The other three people all looked at Suo Jia in shock. Roger cried out in astonishment, “God, don’t tell me that you’re also a cobbler or a blacksmith! I won’t believe it!”

“Hehe...” Suo Jia chuckled mysteriously and smugly replied, “Of course I’m not a cobbler or a blacksmith. In reality, aside from being a water elemental mage, I’m also a very profound alchemist!”

Suo Jia impatiently waved his hand and said, “Ok, ok, you guys shouldn’t ask anymore questions. Since we’re all together, you guys can just watch me closely when the time comes if you still have doubts. Right now...I need to go back and research a bit.”

Suo Jia then turned around to return to his own tent. He retrieved various alchemy books from his interspatial ring and found corresponding notes as well. After consolidating Roger’s characteristic traits, he shut himself inside and began to research.

During the next few days, Nicole led the four of them in a large circle to head towards Amin City. Here, various materials that were needed to make Roger’s peak grade equipment set were sold.

Amin City was a city that dealt out minerals and materials. As long as one had the money, they could buy any type of material here, no matter how precious and rare it was. The reason why their collection was so complete was because this place was less than 1000 kilometers away from the starting point of the Greater Trade Routes.

The Greater Trade Routes only used one type of currency, and no other country's money was circulated. Moreover, it couldn't be exchanged either. Thus, no matter how much wealth one had, it would become complete garbage upon entering the Greater Trade Routes.

To adventurers, entering the Greater Trade Routes basically meant not coming out alive. That's why, they'd use up all their money before entering to increase their strength. By purchasing materials and ores, they'd be able to upgrade their own armor and weapons. This was the most effective action.

Wherever a request was made, a business for it would be established. As time passed, Amin City gradually expanded from a small village into today's Amin City. Merchants from all over the world carrying various ores and materials would rush here to sell their items. This place was where one could sell such things for the highest possible prices.

It could be said that one could buy anything here, no matter how expensive it was. As long as one had the money, it wasn't a problem. Even ambrosia could be found here, let alone normal raw materials.

Of course, just having materials and ores was nowhere near enough. No matter how many such things one had, it was impossible to upgrade a magic equipment's level without the help of a blacksmith or a cobbler. That's why...aside from minerals, this place was also where great scholars and masters gathered. Of course...requesting them required a large amount of gold. If one just had small change, there wasn't even any point in thinking about asking help; the great masters wouldn't even be willing to meet with such people.

Suo Jia's group rushed through their journey. Finally...they entered the city of freedom: Amin. They first rested for a while at a hotel, then under Nicole's lead, headed towards the bazaar.

Chapter 289: Huge Fortune (Part 1)

Amin City's bazaar was established within a large district. This bazaar was actually an area that spanned over 4 streets. All merchandise was sold within shops, and not actually displayed outside.

"Sky Crystals!" Suo Jia couldn't help but cry out in shock at the display on an ore-peddling shop's front counter. The fact that such precious ores were in such an unremarkable little shop made Suo Jia feel like he was picking up some kind of treasure.

Seeing how excited Suo Jia looked, the store's boss warmly greeted him. He rubbed his hands together as he said, "Did something catch this customer's eye? Is it that Sky Crystal? It's very cheap, only 1000 diamond coins!"

"What!" Suo Jia couldn't help but let out a strange shout. One diamond coin was equivalent to 100 amethyst coins, and 10,000 crystal coins were equivalent to a million gold! A piece of rock that small was actually worth a ridiculous value of a billion!

Seeing Suo Jia's shocked expression, the boss said in annoyance, "Customer, please don't think this as expensive. This Sky Crystal can be forged into Legendary ranked, and even Epic ranked peak grade materials. This price is definitely cheap!"

"Haha..." Suo Jia's dryly chuckled with an agonized expression. From the boss's words, this Sky Crystal indeed seemed pretty cheap. However, the amount of metal that this Sky Crystal could

be smelted into would at most be only enough for a ring. Moreover, if one wanted to create a Legendary ranked magic equipment, a peak grade gem was also necessary, which made the total price even more boundless.

Seeing Suo Jia's forced expression, Nicole quietly moved to Suo Jia's side and said, "Please, Boss, can you not be so embarrassing? This place can't be compared to Holy Light. Holy Light's money is of so little value. Most of the currency distributed between the countries in this world is crystal coins. A crystal coin can be exchanged for 100 gold coins."

Suo Jia nodded bitterly. Actually, he knew of this fact ages ago. Holy Light Empire was just too small, and its economy wasn't that developed. Thus, it had serious inflation. In terms of exchanging with another country, the other party wouldn't even be willing to trade 100 gold with anyone from Holy Light.

Although they were called gold coins, Holy Light Empire's currency was actually made of copper. It was both thin and light. The reason they were called gold coins were because they were metal currency, not currency made of actual gold (TL Note: In Chinese, 金 can mean gold or metal in general.)

Suo Jia made some calculations. After helping Nicole pay her debt, Suo Jia only had 10 billion gold coins left. If they were exchanged for diamond coins, he could get 10,000 diamond coins and buy 10 Sky Crystals. However these 10 Sky Crystals didn't seem to be enough for that many materials!

A pair of combat boots, as well as combat trousers required a lot

of materials. In addition...Suo Jia also wanted to bring some expensive heavy metals to the Greater Trade Routes with him. After all...who knew if they'd get any more companions. Moreover...Suo Jia required precious heavy metals for his alchemy experiments.

Suo Jia turned around and left the shop. He let Nicole lead them to a bank and exchanged all the money he had into diamond coins. After looking at the large bag of diamond coins, they continued to walk about.

They toured around until the afternoon, before entering a tavern with bitter expressions. However, nobody was in the mood to drink. They simply filled their stomachs before sitting still while staring blankly into space.

After walking around the bazaar for half a day, they'd all realized that the cheapest thing on display here was still worth hundreds of diamond coins. Anything that was slightly more appealing was worth thousands of diamond coins!

The most ridiculous part was that everything was just like that Sky Crystal. Although it was only 1000 diamond coins, buying enough to create a pair of combat boots required buying 100 of them. That would be a total sum of 100,000 diamond coins. However, Suo Jia only 10,000 at the moment, so he didn't even have enough to buy the materials needed for one pair of combat boots.

In addition, after collecting information, they'd discovered that if one wanted to make equipment, the manufacturing cost alone

would be 10,000 diamond coins. Thus, all the money in his hands was only enough to cover this cost.

At the moment neither Roger nor Nicole had money, let alone Xiang Yun. Only Suo Jia still had some money. But this amount was nowhere near enough to use. Thus the four of them simply sat in the tavern in a depressed mood.

Originally, Suo Jia had wanted to peddle some potions here too. However, this place already had such businesses. This included the ones he produced in White Villa. As for his Spirit Potions, Magic Potions, and Endurance Potions, Suo Jia didn't really want to sell too many here. Otherwise, if these fell into enemy hands, wouldn't it be equivalent to seeking trouble for himself?

Suo Jia gritted his teeth, thinking over this issue for a long time. Having reached this stage, he was helplessly forced to sell some. Although he clearly knew that the potions could fall into the wrong hands, this was all he could do.

Suo Jia turned around to say to Nicole, "Nicole...does Amin City have any auction houses?"

Nicole looked at Suo Jia in confusion and replied, "Your words are too strange. This place is a commerce city, how could there be no auction house? Even a small city would have such a thing, this place naturally wouldn't be lacking."

Suo Jia nodded in thought and stood up, "In that case, fine...everyone follow me. We're going to an auction house. In order to

gather a complete equipment set for Roger, we must sell some items.”

Suo Jia began to walk out from the tavern. The other three didn't dare fall behind, and hurriedly caught up with him, walking together towards the auction house. They were quite confused, exactly what was Suo Jia selling? This place was filled with priceless treasures; normal things would never be accepted by an auction.

Suo Jia walked straight into the auction house to confront the receptionist, indicating that he wanted to sell something. In response to Suo Jia's application, the receptionist formally replied, “Alright, now...please take out the items you wish to auction. We have experts that will appraise the items. They must reach a certain grade level to be sold here!”

Suo Jia nodded, and took out several belts from his interspatial ring. He tossed them onto the table and said, “Go ahead and look. These are the items I wish to sell.”

The receptionist glanced at the belts and said lazily, “Oh? The four colored potions produced by Holy Light City? I'm sorry, but that grade level is too low. These don't have the qualifications to be auctioned here!”

“What!” Suo Jia couldn't help but cry out in shock. How was that possible, he'd never sold these four colored potions before. They should've been enough to enter this auction.

Suo Jia suddenly recalled that the 36 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes had these four colored potions. Moreover...the 5000 lancer users and 5000 Velociraptor Knights back in Dawn City also had copious amounts of these potions. It looked like they had clearly been unable to resist the temptation of the money, and violated Suo Jia's orders, revealing the four colored potions to the public.

Suo Jia couldn't help but grind his teeth in regret. Those despicable bastards seemed to have completely ignored what Suo Jia had said back then and violated his commands. In that case, they'd better wait to be punished. Although Suo Jia didn't have the ability to do that now, there would eventually come a day that he'd be able to punish them into suffering!

The receptionist said in disdain, "Although your four colored potions are valid, their uses are too limited. Those that enter the Greater Trade Routes are at the very least Full-Fledged Mages. These four colored potions replenish too little, and aren't worth much money."

Suo Jia's heart skipped a beat at the receptionist's words. Back when he'd created the four colored potions in Dawn, they had indeed replenished little. After all...they were only equivalent to 20% of a Full-Fledged Mage's entire magic power supply.

Although Suo Jia had already been a Great Mage back then, he'd already been able to contain so much energy into the potions without refining them. Now, Suo Jia wouldn't even be able to replenish half his magic power with 10 potions, so they weren't very useful at all. Thus, they had little value.

However, the refined potions were different. These had been purified, extracted, and compressed. Although they were the same volume, the refined potions could replenish great amounts of energy. Even Suo Jia's current magic power supply could be completely refilled after drinking only one bottle.

Suo Jia smiled and said, "Friend, I think you're mistaken. My potions aren't the ones you've seen before. These are refined potions, and they can replenish 10x more energy than normal potions!"

Chapter 290: Huge Fortune (Part 2)

“What!” The receptionist abruptly stood up and trembled as she said, “What did you say? You said...these potions can replenish 10x more energy than a normal potion?!”

Suo Jia confidently nodded and declared, “Putting aside normal mages, even Great Mages, Magic Scholars, and Great Magic Scholars would be able to restore all their magic power and spirit power at once!”

“Heavens!” The receptionist stared at Suo Jia in shock and hurriedly said, “Please wait a moment, I’ll bring these to the appraisers inside now. Once your words are verified, we’ll definitely package and sell them!” The receptionist carefully gathered the belts and ran to the appraisers in the back.

In just a moment, a middle aged fatty ran out with the receptionist, quickly approaching the counter. At the same time, the receptionist respectfully said, “Customer, this is the boss of our auction. He’ll explain the rest of the work you’ll have to do.”

Suo Jia nodded and turned to look at the auction boss. The auction boss respectfully nodded back and said politely, “The potions you supplied just now have already been appraised. They are indeed as you say; any mages under the Magister rank can restore their magic power completely with only one bottle. But exactly how many of these potions do you have?”

“Hmm...” After some thinking, Suo Jia firmly displayed the

number with his fingers, “Not that many, a total of 10 sets!”

“Heavens!” The auction boss cried out in delight and said, “Mister, if you sell all 10 sets of potions at our auction house, we’ll lower our auction fees from 10% to 5%. What do you think...”

“Hmm...” After pretending to ponder it for a while, Suo Jia firmly replied, “Ok then. I’ll sell all 10 sets of potions here. However...you can’t sell them all in one day, but rather throughout the week. Sell one set every day from Monday to Saturday, then four on Sunday. I hope that Boss can help me publicize it a bit.”

After hearing Suo Jia’s agreement, the auction boss was so happy that he couldn’t hide his large smile. He reached into his pocket to pull out a golden card, and passed it over to Suo Jia. “This is the VIP card for our auction house. With this, you can come every night at 8pm and attend our great auctions!”

“This...” Suo Jia hesitantly looked at the golden card and then back at the boss before struggling to say, “Boss, can you give me a few more cards? Look...we have four people!”

“Hahahaha...” The boss laughed and carefreely replied, “Don’t worry, I noticed that a while ago. Using this card, you can bring 5 people in with you. This card also grants you a box that can fit 6 people at most, so you don’t need to worry at all.”

Suo Jia smiled and nodded before bidding farewell to the boss. He then brought everyone back to the hotel for closed door

training up until 7pm. Afterwards, they gathered at the entrance once more to attend the auction together.

The course of events that passed at the auction wasn't anything of note, it was just people shouting out various prices. The only thing worth mentioning was that Suo Jia had finally witnessed real "wealthy people". They seemed to be using the diamond coins like gold coins. Suo Jia's little bit of money was nothing in comparison.

Luckily, Suo Jia soon got over his envy. After a week, all ten sets of the potions had been sold. Each set had been sold for a high price of a million diamond coins. After selling all of them, Suo Jia had also become a millionaire.

Now that he had money, Suo Jia naturally went to purchase various ores and materials without holding back. Suo Jia soon discovered that this amount of money turned out to be less than he'd thought. Just buying the materials for Roger's legguards and combat boots, in addition to manufacturing fee, already used up over 200,000!

Helpless, Suo Jia could only take out another ten sets of potions to auction off, then continue to shop around the bazaar. At the same time, Roger's legguards and combat boots were beginning to be made.

Originally, Suo Jia had only wanted to stay in Amin City for a week before leaving, but seeing the various extremely rare and precious ores and materials in the shops, Suo Jia wasn't able to bring himself to leave at all. These things were priceless to him;

they were materials necessary for alchemic products and the magic automatons!

Finally, after staying in Amin City for an entire month and auctioning off hundreds of four colored potions, Suo Jia finally used an astronomical amount of money to purchase off all the ores and materials that he fancied.

With these materials, Suo Jia first created some second generation interspatial rings, three each for Nicole and Xiang Yun. One to store everyday products, one to store tents and clothes, and the final one to store weapons or other items used for battle. Of course...if one had enough spirit power, the second generation interspatial rings could also instantly materialize Space Shields without end! This was an extremely effective defense weapon.

As for Roger, he demanded 10 interspatial rings. One used for everyday items, one for bedding and tents, and the remaining 8 all used to store cooking equipment and various foods!

Finally was Suo Jia. Even he personally didn't know how many 10 cubic meter space second generation interspatial rings he'd filled. He only knew that all of Amin City's peak grade ores and materials were already completely swept away by him.

After buying the last material, Suo Jia's group rushed to a forging master to custom order both the combat boots and legguards.

Roger's weapons were different from any other person's: boots and legguards. Moreover, these two parts largely impacted

movements, so they couldn't be too heavy or hard. Crossing the Greater Trade Routes mostly relied on walking. Although there were roads, majority of it still needed to be passed through on foot.

If the combat boots and legguards were made of metal, the sturdy metal would cause huge blisters to arise on one's legs. In addition, its heaviness would make walking difficult. Ordinary movements would become a problem, let alone fighting.

Having considered all this, Suo Jia didn't choose metal as materials. Instead, he'd chosen flexible and soft, as well as incomparably solid Black Dragon's inverted scale leather. With these boots, even magic could be dispersed with the feet. The Black Dragon's inverted scale's immunity to magic wasn't a mere exaggeration.

However, everyone knew that while the Black Dragon's inverted scale was flexible, soft, and incomparably solid; it couldn't block the slashes of a sharp weapon. If the foot kicked a sharp blade, the boot would be completely cut apart, rendering it unusable.

Roger used his feet and legs to fight. Thus...he chose the soles to be made of the extremely light and thin, yet indestructible Black Dragon horn. No weapon could ever leave any mark on a Black Dragon's horn. Being kicked by Roger's foot wouldn't be any different from crashing into a Black Dragon's head.

Of course, the entire horn couldn't be used as the sole. Although it was indestructible, that depended on the person. To a blacksmith, it was still possible to break it by soaking it in Aqua regia for an entire week. This caused the horn to soften, making it

easy to mold into any shape.

The Black Dragon horn was very thick so...after it was softened, a sharp blade was used to carve out the Black Dragon's inverted scale leather within. The horn's body was then bent to form combat boots. The super black combat boots were thus formed.

After creating the dragon horn soles, the outside of the boots were made entirely of the horn, bent into the shape of boots. The outside surface was covered with openwork engravings, revealing the inverted scale in the inner layers. The tips of the boots were slightly tapered to form flat yet piercing tips.

The combat boots were shining black, and the carvings on the exterior surface were especially filled with an indescribable mysterious feeling. The boots were both simple and elegant. No person could keep their eyes off of them, they were just too cool, too handsome, too stylish.

As for the legguards, or combat trousers, Suo Jia used the Wind Dragon's wing leather as material. He cut out the long golden trousers according to Roger's body, skillfully forming a pair of pants. The good thing about the Wind Dragon wing leather was that no matter how fast one was, the leather negated any air resistance. With the help of the wind elements, the speed of Roger's legs would be increased.

Of course, this was still not even Legendary ranked magic equipment at the moment. They were just made of Black Dragon horn, inverted scale, and Wind Dragon wing leather. If one wanted to turn them into true magic equipment, Suo Jia would need to

help. Although the craftsmen could do this as well, Suo Jia believed that he was more suitable for this work. In terms of alchemy, Suo Jia far surpassed any of these crafting masters.

Chapter 291: Establishing A Team Leader

(Part 1)

During the following few days, Suo Jia stayed locked up in his room adding the finishing touches to the Dragon Boots and War Dragon Legguards. Using alchemy, he engraved magic spell arrays into the equipment so that they shadowed and linked to each other, forming a small Epic ranked equipment set.

The reason Suo Jia did it personally was because he had grasped auxiliary magics that nobody else knew. He carved out the magic arrays for Berserk Impact. With its boost, the impact force of Roger's legs was increased by twofold!

As for the War Dragon Legguards, Suo Jia had engraved the Acceleration Drive spell array onto them. This magic was originally meant to boost magic activation speed, but after being engraved onto the legguards, the speed of Roger's legs were increased instead.

It could be said that just based on these two factors alone, Roger's leg speed and force would be doubled after wearing the equipment. This was already equivalent to a Legendary ranked equipment. But Suo Jia wasn't satisfied with just that.

Roger was a wind attributed warrior, an expert in the wind elemental battle qi. Thus, Suo Jia also carved the Tornado Wind magic array onto the legguards. The centripetal speed of the legs were its fastest state. Engraving this array was equivalent to Roger having mastered the Tornado Wind magic. Using this, Roger's attack power would definitely increase exponentially!

As for the Dragon Boots, Suo Jia had also added extra features as well. He'd carved the Shattering Strike formation, which was actually an ultimate battle skill that berserkers used. When activated by an Advanced Berserker, it could smash even iron into smithereens.

Finally, after completing the last adjustment, Suo Jia presented the two perfect magic equipments to Roger. Seeing the black and gold equipments, Roger excitedly grabbed them and returned to his room to change into them.

Soon afterwards, Roger walked over with a sullen expression and weakly said to Suo Jia, "Please, Boss, can you change the trousers to black? I don't like yellow!"

"Eh..." After blanking standing there for a moment, Suo Jia silently reached out to grab the trousers and after some adjustments, dyed them black. Under the sun's rays, the pitch-black trousers seemed to glow.

Roger excitedly snatched them away and went back to change once more. Not long after, Roger complacently walked out wearing the black trousers and the glinting black combat boots on his feet.

"Wow!" Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Nicole couldn't help but cry out at Roger's clothes. After looking Roger up and down, Xiang Yun sighed in admiration, "I didn't realize before that your legs were actually so long! They're completely disproportional to your body!"

“Hehe...” Roger smugly smiled and arrogantly declared, “Everyone in my family has long legs. How about it? Am I good-looking enough?”

“Tch...” Nicole said in disdain, “You’re not even a girl, yet you get so conceited over long legs? Long-legged beauties are distinguished, but long-legged men...just sounds strange.”

Roger immediately frowned as he said in a low voice, “A girl like you just doesn’t understand how to appreciate things. Long-legged men and long-legged women are equally charming!”

Nicole surveyed Roger and then shook her head. “Why don’t I feel anything? In my eyes, you’re just like a long-legged partridge, not good-looking at all!”

Nicole tilted her head and looked at Roger’s trousers. “However, your pants are quite stylish. They’re both black and glossy; they definitely give off a cool feel.”

“Hmph!” Roger coldy snorted, ignoring Nicole. At this time, Xiang Yun’s voice rang out lowly, “Alright, Roger, now that your equipment has been repaired, why don’t we fight another round?”

“Huhu...” Sharply scissor-kicking the air, Roger confidently replied, “If you want to come at me, go ahead. I’ll accompany you whenever you’d like!”

Xiang Yun nodded and turned around to look at Nicole and Suo Jia. “If we go a bit further ahead, we should be entering the Greater Trade Routes. Before that, should we elect a leader? Otherwise, a pack of dragons without a leader will be completely lacking in cohesion and teamwork. We won’t be able to gather any of our fighting strength!”

“Hm?” Nicole stared at Xiang Yun in confusion and said, “Does that still need an election? The boss is naturally Suo Jia, right, Roger?”

Roger nodded without any hesitation, “Of course. I’ve never served anyone but Young Master Suo Jia. He’s also the only person I’ll ever call Boss in my lifetime.”

Suo Jia couldn’t help but furrow his brows at this discussion. He knew that although he and Xiang Yun had already been acquainted for a while, Xiang Yun clearly didn’t obey him. This couldn’t be blamed on Xiang Yun though...after all, Suo Jia hadn’t shown any of his ability. On what basis was Xiang Yun supposed to be convinced on?

Of course, Suo Jia could adopt some kind of election method, where the lesser one complies to the greater one. If one wasn’t pleased with this, they could leave. However, Suo Jia didn’t really want to do this. Xiang Yun was a loyal and responsible hot-blooded man. If Suo Jia lost this kind of friend, he’d regret it for the rest of his life. That’s why, Xiang Yun was a companion that couldn’t be lost no matter what.

Suo Jia knew that the current Xiang Yun felt that only strength

was enjoyable. Unless Suo Jia displayed enough strength to convince Xiang Yun, there was no way Xiang Yun would willingly obey Suo Jia.

Suo Jia knew of Xiang Yun's past. Although not flourishing anymore, Xiang Yun had originally been the son of some leader. How could he easily concede to being another's subordinate? He wholeheartedly aimed to become the world's strongest warrior!

Suo Jia raised his head to keep Nicole and Roger in check. He then looked at Xiang Yun seriously and said, "Your words are indeed reasonable. We do need to elect a leader, someone that has everyone's trust. This is the only way we can form a strong group and display everyone's true might!"

Suo Jia paused for a bit before continuing, "Right now, I'd like to hear your opinions on how exactly we should elect the boss."

"Clang!" With a fierce clang, Xiang Yun unsheathed the Chasm Moon Blade on his back. He pointed the tip towards the ground as he declared "We're all warriors. If we want to gain others' trust, we must naturally select the best through fights. The saying that warriors are seniors should be a universally understood principle!"

Suo Jia nodded with a smile and firmly replied, "Very good. I also agree with your method. However, there's one part I don't quite agree with."

"Oh? What part?" Xiang Yun asked curiously.

Suo Jia levelly looked at Xiang Yun and said, “Although you’re right in saying warriors are the seniors, that situation doesn’t apply here. We’re all friends, brothers. No matter who’s strong or who’s weak, we’re all equal. The only person we need to choose is someone that’s responsible and can take charge of matters. Although they’re called Boss, everyone’s actually independent, equal, and as close as brothers!”

“Hey!” Nicole retorted, “Aren’t you being a bit sexist! Don’t sisters count?”

“That...” Suo Jia awkwardly rubbed his head and chuckled, “Girls can also be brothers. Hehe...if you really insist, then I guess I can say as close as brothers and sisters. That should be fine, right?”

Nicole nodded in satisfaction and stated, “Yea. This was a first offense so I won’t look into it. In the future, you can’t forget to include us girls in your words!”

Suo Jia sweatdropped and rubbed his head as he hurriedly returned to the original topic, “In reality, anyone can be this Boss figure. It’s just dividing the work up differently. However...since you suggested using martial power to resolve this, let me ask you: If new members join the group later, do we need to re-compete every single time to choose the strongest person as Boss?”

“That...” Xiang Yun couldn’t help but stutter for a bit. That’s right...did that mean every time a new comrade joined, they’d have a contest to see who was the strongest to become the new Boss? That seemed a bit too strange.

Seeing Xiang Yun's frown, Suo Jia continued, "You should know that if the leader of a group isn't stable, internal conflicts will arise. Putting aside the possibility of the group being unable to display its true strength, there's a chance that the group can't even hold!"

"Yea..." Furiously nodding, Xiang Yun said with an experienced tone, "That's right. My hometown was just like that. Every time the Emperor was replaced, there would be a huge turmoil. Thus, many dynasties ended up collapsing like that."

"Mhmm..." Suo Jia nodded with certainty and firmly added, "Who becomes the Boss isn't the problem. But once they're chosen, the position cannot be changed, no matter how powerful future experts that join may be. Once the Boss is elected, we must all unconditionally obey him. Do you agree with this?"

Chapter 292: Establishing A Team Leader

(Part 2)

Xiang Yun nodded and smiled at Suo Jia, “You said just what I wanted you to. Like you said, being the Boss or being the members are fine, it’s just a different division of work. However...if competing in martial arts won’t work, then how do we choose the leader?”

After thinking about it for a bit, Suo Jia declared, “As a boss, one must first have charisma enough to convince others to willingly follow his plans. As for strength, that’s second! A boss doesn’t necessary have to be the first in fighting, having complete control over the overall situation is the most important!”

“You mean to say...? We shouldn’t be using martial arts to choose the leader then?” Xiang Yun frowned.

“No!” Suo Jia resolutely shook his head and smiled at Xiang Yun. “Right now, Nicole and Roger clearly don’t want the leader position, right?” Suo Jia looked over at Nicole and Roger.

The two simultaneously nodded in response, indication their agreement. They simply wanted to accompany Suo Jia on his travels; they wouldn’t ever in their lifetime become Suo Jia’s superior.

This wasn’t just related to owing him a favor. In terms of wisdom, Nicole and Roger both knew that they’d never be on the same level as Suo Jia. Although Suo Jia was the youngest among

them four, he wasn't that much younger.

Although Suo Jia was only 16 years old this year, Xiang Yun was 18, and both Roger and Nicole were only 19. The largest age gap was only 3 years. In terms of only stratagem and tactics, Suo Jia clearly couldn't be compared with the others.

Suo Jia nodded and turned around to narrow his eyes at Xiang Yun. "In reality, I can't think of any better way to elect the leader either. However...since you suggested using martial arts to decide everything, that's fine too."

Suo Jia looked back at Nicole and Roger. "Nicole and Roger are both my friends, and they've been with me for a long time. In other words, as long as you defeat me and I recognize you as the leader, those two will naturally do so as well."

"That..." Roger and Nicole thought about it for a bit before nodding, "That's right, Boss's boss is obviously Boss as well!"

"Alright!" Xiang Yun's eyes glowed as he laughed, "In that case, this is easy, we can just battle. The winner is king. What do you think?"

Suo Jia nodded indifferently and said, "This isn't really the solution, but it's fine as long as it's only occasionally, and not every time. I hope that regardless of whether the victor is me or you, this will be the only election process ever. Once the boss is decided, it is permanently set!"

“Clang!” Xiang Yun pulled out a war blade from his back and said in a low voice, “Don’t worry, I understand this principle better than you do. Once the boss position is determined, it can’t ever be allowed to change. This is immovable and unquestionable. If anyone attempts to vainly seize the position, everyone else will coordinate together to behead the offender!”

“Ok!” Suo Jia abruptly took a step forward and reached out a hand. “In that case, let’s have a fight. Nicole and Roger will be the judges of the victor for this battle. The one who wins will become the leader!”

Facing Xiang Yun, Suo Jia didn’t dare waste any time. With a quick wave of his right hand, an arm-thick ice stream over 9 meters long flowed out from his hand. The long ice stream wrapped itself around Suo Jia’s body. Through the small chinks in the ice, one could faintly see Suo Jia being protected within.

“Crack...crack...crack...” Amidst the sounds of friction coming from the coiling ice stream, Suo Jia said, “Alright, Xiang Yun, you can attack any time you want!”

Xiang Yun gritted his teeth and his eyes suddenly flashed with a piercing light. He shook the Chasm Moon Blade in his hand, his body following the blade. With a flash of yellow light, it violently slashed towards Suo Jia.

Suo Jia’s eyes suddenly opened wide. His right foot abruptly stomped on the ground, instantly activating Diamond Charge. At the same time, Suo Jia materialized Water God’s Shield. The pale blue, bubble-like magic shield tightly wrapped itself around Suo

Jia immediately.

Xiang Yun didn't pay any mind to Suo Jia's Diamond Charge. With a wild downward slash of the war blade in his hand, a blazing sword qi lit up. Even the Diamond Charge was slashed into halves by it. Not a single ice diamond was able to approach within 2 meters from Xiang Yun's body.

Suo Jia didn't panic at the sight. This had all fallen within his calculations. As Xiang Yun had slashed down to disperse Diamond Charge, Suo Jia had brandished his right hand and caused the long ice stream to instantly leap outwards. Like a python, it sprung towards Xiang Yun.

"Clang!" With a fierce clash, Xiang Yun's blade chopped down onto the ice stream. The instant his blade and the ice stream came into contact, Suo Jia's right hand quickly shot forwards, loosely clapping onto the body of the ice stream.

"Gela..." A strange sound rang out. Xiang Yun remained in his downward cut position, his entire body frozen within a large ice ball 2 meters in diameter. That's right...Suo Jia had activated Freezing Touch with the help of the ice stream!

However, Suo Jia wasn't naive enough to believe that successfully freezing Xiang Yun was enough to defeat him. Suo Jia quickly retreated backwards. With another wave of his right hand, a blue light flashed from the palm of Suo Jia's blue glove. The instant Xiang Yun managed to shatter the ice, and Ice Roar was instantly activated.

The freezing cold stream of air mixed with the hundreds of sharp ice blades wildly burst out to wreak havoc. For a moment, Xiang Yun could only frantically swing his Chasm Moon Blade around, blocking the ice blades that were incessantly shooting at him.

However, Suo Jia wasn't a normal mage. With the help of the Atlantis equipment set, he could instantly activate Ice Roar. As long as his magic power wasn't exhausted, he could continue doing so without end.

For a while, Xiang Yun's figure was completely enshrouded by the ice and snow as Suo Jia activated four Ice Roars in succession before stopping. Since he didn't dare consuming any more potions, Suo Jia had to properly calculate his magic power consumption!

Although he'd only activated 4 Ice Roars, Suo Jia knew that Xiang Yun had already entered the frozen state. His movements had been slowed, and his attacks were also impaired by quite a bit. The next part was just dragging out time!

Suo Jia shot out Mysterious Ice Arrows one after another. After 8 years of practicing this thousands of times per day, the Mysterious Ice Arrow had already become Suo Jia's innate ability. At Suo Jia's current level of strength, he could pretty much release Ice Arrows endlessly without being concerned about his magic power.

Xiang Yun struggled to move, constantly blocking Suo Jia's lightning fast Mysterious Ice Arrows. Up until now, he still hadn't conceded. Although his whole body was frozen stiff, his inner

power was still quickly circulating through his body as it normally did. Qi couldn't ever be frozen!

Xiang Yun took a deep breath and suddenly began to gather the qi within his body. His body began to spiral like a dragon, and the Chasm Moon Blade sent out 6 slashes of blade qi in one go. This rendered Suo Jia unable to continue releasing Mysterious Ice Arrows. Then...Xiang Yun's body suddenly leapt up, and he covered the over 20 meter long distance with a strange movement. In a flash, he appeared at Suo Jia's side. The Chasm Moon Blade shot out rays of yellow light in all directions, as Xiang Yun raised it high up into the air. Beneath the blade was Suo Jia, who still hadn't had the time to react!

Chapter 293: The Leader's Jurisdiction (Part 1)

Seeing Xiang Yun instantly appear in the air, Suo Jia couldn't help but admit that he'd indeed been careless. However, one couldn't really blame him...Xiang Yun's body had been frozen, how could he still have such a ridiculous speed? To think that he could still cover a distance of 20 meters and take the initiative to attack; this was something that Suo Jia hadn't ever heard of before!

If Suo Jia wasn't cautious enough, he'd fall to a single slash. But currently, the Water God's Shield still existed. Although Xiang Yun attacked 6 times in succession, they only broke the shield.

Since when had the Water God's Shield become so amazing? It actually wasn't anything surprising, Suo Jia and Xiang Yun were only 3 years apart, and Suo Jia had started collecting the Epic ranked equipment set ages ago. His training speed was something that was impossible to either his ancestors or his descendents.

Aside from providing a set defensive ability, the Water God's Shield also had the unique trait of being able to utilize the user's magic power and spirit power to strengthen itself. Suo Jia's current spirit and magic power levels had far surpassed the norm. Thus...although the might of Suo Jia's magic wasn't very great because of the realm he'd reached, his magic power and spirit power were terrifyingly high.

It could be said that Xiang Yun's ability to break Suo Jia's Water God's Shield within six attacks was already something to be proud

of. Although there were many, many people that could do this, those that could reach this point by the age of 19 were very few, even if one scoured the entire world for them.

Faced against Xiang Yun's attack, Suo Jia felt fear for the first time in his life. Too fast, each of his six strikes just got faster and faster. The six attacks could practically be said to have combined into one. In just a mere moment, they'd already cut through six different locations. After Xiang Yun finished attacking, Suo Jia finally had the time to activate the third generation interspatial ring on his left hand, instantly materializing a Space Shield!

The interspatial rings above the third generation were the storage devices with the largest space in the entire world. They could release the Space Shield as an absolute defense; within 3 seconds, even gods wouldn't be able to dream of breaking through this absolute shield.

Right now, with the amplification of Suo Jia's powerful magic power and spirit power, the absolute shield could last for a great length of six seconds. In other words, no matter who the enemy was, Suo Jia was absolutely safe for six seconds under the protection of the activated third generation Space Shield.

"Bang! Bang! Bang..." Xiang Yun wildly slashed down a dozen times, but he was shocked to discover that although the blue energy shield clearly shattered, he still couldn't cut Suo Jia. Every time the war blade was within a 1 meter radius from Suo Jia, it'd encounter an unsurpassable protective energy that would completely dissipate his attacks.

While Xiang Yun was feeling shocked, Suo Jia was also astonished to death. If Xiang Yun continued to slash down like this, he'd be extremely troubled after six seconds was up. Although Xiang Yun's skin was frozen, his speed didn't slow down at all. If he continued to attack like this, Suo Jia would definitely fall to his attack right then and there.

In his panic, Suo Jia stopped caring about his magic power and spirit power consumption. The instant the Space Shield's protection disappeared, Suo Jia's right foot stamped down three times. Instantly, three Diamond Charges rushed out like waves one after another.

Xiang Yun could completely block one Diamond Charge, and just barely deal with two in succession. But when three attacked him at once, Xiang Yun couldn't help but be swept away by the powerful force, despite how strong he was. His body was sent flying back over 50 meters before he managed to stop.

"Pant...pant...pant..." The sounds of intense breathing could be heard. There was a 50 meter difference between Xiang Yun and Suo Jia as they looked at each other from the distance. The waves of attack just now had drained too much energy from both of them. In such a fierce battle, neither person could hold back. Even if they charged at the other party with all their might, they might not necessarily win. In that case, they had to use all of their strength.

"Powerful!" This word appeared in both Xiang Yun's and Suo Jia's minds at the same time. Although...they'd both encountered stronger existences before and seen countless of them, having this

kind of strength at such an age was something neither of them had seen before.

Suo Jia looked at the distant Xiang Yun. He knew that if they continued to fight like this, the final loss would definitely be his. The freezing effect was useless on Xiang Yun, and long ranged attacks wouldn't be much of a threat to him either. When Suo Jia's magic power was completely exhausted, he'd be unable to escape from his fate of losing.

Of course, Suo Jia could drink potions. However...that was like drinking poison to quench one's thirst. After drinking the potions, Suo Jia's efforts this past half a year would pretty much become wasted. This was like killing a goose that laid golden eggs. Unless he was in a critical life-or-death moment, Suo Jia definitely wouldn't do such a thing.

Suo Jia gravely looked at Xiang Yun and said, "You are indeed very formidable. I can only display all of my strength if I hope to defeat you!"

Suo Jia stretched out his left hand. With a flash of blue light, a milky-white figure gradually appeared in the air before him.

"That's?" Xiang Yun couldn't help but be puzzled about the little creature that appeared before Suo Jia.

Suo Jia calmly replied with a smile, "This is my magical pet. You'd better watch out, you can't underestimate it just because it's small right now. Once it enters its combat state, it's extremely

powerful!”

Xiang Yun couldn't help but curiously look over at the creation in front of Suo Jia. It was about the size of a pug, and had a pair of wings. Its entire body was covered with milky-white scales. Xiang Yun furrowed his brows, he was certain that he could pulverize this little creature just by stepping on it, and couldn't imagine how it could be any powerful.

Suo Jia was actually very shocked as well. Compared to before, the Diamond Dragon seemed to have shrunk by quite a bit again. It had gone from a mature wolfdog size to a pug dog size. Its body was less than a meter tall, and it was round and chubby. It looked pretty cute, and didn't show any hints of being very formidable.

However, the Diamond Dragon's inner essence-like cold air couldn't be faked. Suo Jia knew that the Diamond Dragon's strength had remarkably increased once more during these short few months.

Suo Jia loudly declared, “Alright, Diamond Dragon, prepare for battle!”

“Chirp chip!” The Diamond Dragon quickly flapped its little wings and chirped in reply. At the same time, layers of blue Glacial Armor quickly appeared on the surface of its body.

Everyone watched as layer after layer of Mysterious Ice covered the little dragon's outer body. Within only 2-3 seconds, a giant Diamond Dragon 6 meters tall was flapping its great wings of ice in

front of everyone.

“This...this is!” Xiang Yun couldn’t help but gape at the feeling of the pressuring and freezing aura. He couldn’t wrap his mind around what exactly had happened just now. Why did something that looked like a cute pug turn into such a frightening ice beast in the blink of an eye!

Xiang Yun shook his head and forced himself to look at the great creature as a paper tiger. He brandished the war blade in his hand, and wildly shot out towards Suo Jia. Unfortunately for him, after only a few steps, the Great Frost Wurm opened its humongous mouth and abruptly blew outwards, instantly locking Xiang Yun and his blades in their original position, maintaining his frontal charge stance.

The onlookers couldn’t help but feel like they were about to faint. What did this count as? This was the Great Frost Wurm’s signature battle skill, the unreplicable Ice Seal Technique. Once it struck, its target would become sealed within a block of Mysterious Ice. The most unfathomable part was that even the magic-immune Black Dragon would be sealed by this, because...the ice seal used space as its target, not a physical object. As long as the body was within this space, they’d be sealed in!

Of course, this Ice Seal wasn’t unrivaled. Like the Freezing Touch, one only had to break through a few of the ice layers. But...the more ridiculous part was that this Ice Seal was only the Great Frost Wurm’s normal attack. In reality, after mastering the Ice Seal Technique, it would indicate that it had entered the long term period! From this moment on, the little creature was finally suited

to be called “Great Frost Wyrn”!

Chapter 294: The Leader's Jurisdiction (Part 2)

Ten minutes later, the battle finally ended. Xiang Yun sat down with an agonized expression, his gaze locked onto that milky-white, pug-like Diamond Dragon in Suo Jia's arms. He had been completely unable to deal with that little creature.

The Diamond Dragon's Ice Seal couldn't actually seal Xiang Yun. After some preparations, he was able to break out of it with just a wave of his blade. But it was still quite annoying; with the Diamond Dragon obstructing him, it was impossible for Xiang Yun to smoothly attack. Every few steps he'd have to dodge or use his blade to shatter ice. He'd almost gone crazy from annoyance.

That wasn't all. Suo Jia had ended up jumping onto the Diamond Dragon's shoulders and constantly attacked Xiang Yun with Mysterious Ice Arrows. Whenever Xiang Yun tried to get close, the Great Frost Wyrms would activate Ice Seal and Diamond Charge to block him. Moreover, the Diamond Dragon's sharp ice claws and thick, long ice tail wildly attacked Xiang Yun at close range. For a while, Xiang Yun couldn't even get near Suo Jia.

Faced against an Ice Seal every attack and a Diamond Charge at any time, as well as the Great Frost Wyrms' large body filled with brute power, Xiang Yun wisely conceded.

With the Diamond Dragon, Xiang Yun couldn't approach Suo Jia at all. As a mage, Suo Jia could activate long ranged attacks without restraint once he was at a certain distance. A warrior had no odds of success to speak of. Suo Jia's Mysterious Ice Arrows

alone were enough to exhaust Xiang Yun completely.

Suo Jia smiled at the gloomy Xiang Yun and said, “Oh, Xiang Yun, you don’t have to be too depressed over it. If we had done 1v1, I definitely wouldn’t have matched up to you. Only the combination of me and my Diamond Dragon was enough to force you into admitting defeat. In reality, you didn’t actually lose!”

Xiang Yun forced a smile and replied, “You don’t need to comfort me, a loss is a loss. The Diamond Dragon is your secret weapon, and we didn’t have any restrictions in our battle. As long as you defeated me, anything you did was fine. Just like I said earlier, the victor is the king!”

Xiang Yun suddenly became more focused as he said sincerely to Suo Jia, “Alright, since I lost to you, then you are our group’s leader. Our future plans will be decided by you!”

Suo Jia didn’t bother with any pleasantries, and nodded. “In that case, I’ll simply say this: if there’s anything wrong, or if anyone has better opinions, please suggest them. Although I’m the leader, every member’s suggestions need to be heard. My responsibility is to combine everyone’s ideas together to bring up a final verdict.”

“Yes...” Xiang Yun praised, “You’re right. As a captain, the most important part is to organize your group members’ ideas and suggestions and make the final decision.”

Suo Jia nodded and said in a serious voice, “We’ve pretty much finished what we needed to do in Amin City. Next, we should rush

to Falan Empire. After making proper preparations there, we'll enter Tagan Desert to reach Loze City. From there, we can step into the Greater Trade Routes. What does everyone think?"

Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun all passed Suo Jia's suggestion. Following that...they tidied up their things, and after replenishing some supplies, left Amin City to head directly to Falan Empire.

After a period of time, their group successfully reached Falan, and after replenishing their supplies once more, they entered the world's most sinister place, the hardest area to survive in—Tagan Desert!

It was certain that the journey would be difficult. Fortunately, every warrior was used to hardships. Although it would be arduous, a treasure hunter like Nicole would be able to smoothly lead their group to find the hidden oasis within Tagan Desert, and locate its sole city—Loze City!

Loze City was the starting point of the Greater Trade Routes. All those that tried to enter the Greater Trade Routes would have to gain information about it at this city. Only after recording their name and receiving a token would they be able to formally enter the Greater Trade Routes. Otherwise, even if one successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes, who would know?

After reorganizing themselves in Loze City for three days and replenished enough food and everyday products, Suo Jia's group split up to go to their respective unions for a verification of their occupation. Not just anyone was allowed to enter the Greater Trade Routes; if one didn't reach a certain level, they wouldn't

even be qualified to register.

Without any effort, Suo Jia passed the Great Mage verification. Nicole also unsurprisingly passed her treasure hunter verification. But Roger and Xiang Yun had some more difficulties.

Strictly speaking, Roger and Xiang Yun were both warriors. However, Roger didn't use any weapons, and Xiang Yun didn't use battle qi. There was absolutely no way to verify their statuses as warriors. But they had such super powerful strength, so with lack of better option, the two could only participate in other occupation verification tests.

“Other occupations” referred to uncommon occupations. There were countless types of people that entered the Greater Trade Routes with unique abilities, but didn't count as a conventional-type warrior. In order to differentiate these people, there was an “other occupations” verification!

After the verification process, each person received an occupation title. Suo Jia's title was Lv 2 Occupation—Great Mage, Nicole's title was Lv 2 Occupation—Explorer, Roger's title was Lv 2 Occupation—Leg King, and Xiang Yun's title was Lv 2 Occupation—Knight Errant!

Afterwards, without even eating, the four of them rushed to Loze City's lord's residence to register that they'd confirmed their qualifications. Of course, they couldn't possibly meet the city lord, they just entered the residence and went through matters specifically related to the Greater Trade Routes before registering.

Suo Jia walked up to the front desk and announced the reason for his visit. Although it was obvious why his group had come, as it couldn't possibly be for anything else, the staff member was astonished after seeing the young faces in the group.

The staff member looked at Suo Jia hesitantly and carefully said, "Young friend, not just anyone can enter the Greater Trade Routes. For a mage, you have to receive an occupation verification of above Lv 1 to qualify for entry."

Suo Jia didn't get upset over the other party's looking down on him. He merely pulled out the four forms from his pocket and passed them over to the staff member. Looking at the four forms in shock, the staff member couldn't help but sigh in admiration. The four people standing there were clearly only children, but they had all already reached the strength of Lv 2 Occupations; it was really too ridiculous.

The staff member shook their head and after binding the forms together, picked up another form from the table and passed it over to Suo Jia. "Alright, since you've all passed the occupation verifications, you'll need to fill out this form next."

The four of them accepted the form to inspect it more closely. The first page was to choose their identities once inside the Greater Trade Routes. There were many choices, such as merchants, thieves, adventure groups, mercenary groups...depending on the different statuses, the things they could do in the Greater Trade Routes varied.

There were actually many checkpoints in the Greater Trade Routes. Unless one was truly unrivaled, these checkpoints couldn't be passed with just force. Passing through required one to complete a series of challenges. Completing the Greater Trade Routes wasn't as simple as just walking through it.

There were dangers in every step. Getting through a checkpoint required one to do many things. Merchants had to complete enough business transactions and earn enough money to buy a path guide and pass. Thieves could only rely on stealing. In short, each status had different requirements to pass.

Suo Jia looked at the long list, and then raised his head to look at the other three members. Seeing Suo Jia's questioning gaze, the three of them immediately began to argue noisily. Nicole suggested entering as an adventure group, Roger suggested entering as a mercenary group, and Xiang Yun suggested entering as a thief group. They all stuck to their own opinions, unwilling to relent to anyone else.

Originally, Suo Jia had also wanted to enter as an adventure group. This was the only identity that would allow them to search through the Greater Trade Route's paths in all its entirety, and it would make it easier for him to find his father's whereabouts. Now, after various experiences and long deliberation, Suo Jia decided on the tactics he would use.

Chapter 295: Duo Mei's Decision (Part 1)

Suo Jia swept a glance over his three companions and stretched out a hand, gesturing for them to calm down. Seeing this, Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun simultaneously shut their mouths, doubtfully glancing at Suo Jia.

After some thought, Suo Jia said in a low voice, "We should first stop fighting over what status we will enter with. Right now, I would just like to know one thing: what is everyone's reason for entering the Greater Trade Routes?"

Nicole resolutely replied, "Of course it's to adventure. The Greater Trade Routes have many strange life forms, rare magical beasts, unique landscapes, and treasures left behind from ancient times. That's why, I must enter as an adventurer!"

Suo Jia nodded, and shifted his gaze to Roger. Sensing Suo Jia's gaze, Roger firmly replied, "I don't think that. We aren't going to the Greater Trade Routes to play around, but to become heroes that have successfully passed through! That's why, I believe we should become mercenaries and protect merchant groups along the way. Like that, we'd naturally achieve our goal!"

As soon as Roger finished speaking, Xiang Yun spoke up, "Wrong, you're gravely mistaken. Receiving a false reputation isn't what we want. The reason we are entering the Greater Trade Routes is to constantly challenge ourselves, and surpass our limits. That's why...we've come for the sake of challenging experts. Thus...I believe we need to enter as thieves. Only thieves can challenge others without end!"

Suo Jia smiled and nodded in response to their replied. “Very good, I understand all three of you. In that case, let me integrate all your goals together; in my opinion, the most suitable status to enter as would be as merchants!”

“What!” All three exclaimed and stared at Suo Jia in shock. In unison, they asked, “How is that possible! We’re warriors, how could we enter as merchants!”

Suo Jia calmly replied, “As merchants, we can do business on the Greater Trade Routes. However at the same time, we would also possess the benefits of the other statuses!”

Suo Jia looked at Nicole and said, “Didn’t you want to go adventuring? Didn’t you want to search for rare magical beasts and treasures left behind from ancient times? While shipping merchandise, can’t we go adventuring as well?”

Suo Jia turned his gaze towards Roger. “As for you, I don’t need to say anything else, right? Weren’t you the one that wanted to follow merchants? In that case, if we’re merchants, it’s equivalent to walking ourselves. There’s no difference.”

Finally, Suo Jia looked at Xiang Yun. “As for you, you wanted to challenge experts, which is something I agree with. However, didn’t you know? All the experts are amongst the thieves. In addition...rather than painstakingly going out to search for opponents, why not just take the easy way out and let the opponents personally present themselves to us instead?”

The expressions of Roger and Xiang Yun couldn't help but light up. However, Nicole still wasn't satisfied. She knit her brows and asked, "Although you say that, according to your words, can we not obtain all these benefits by entering with a different status?"

"No!" Suo Jia firmly shook his head and explained, "Take entering as thieves as an example. Although we would be able to do business on the Greater Trade Routes, once a thief group becomes renowned, who would be willing to do any business with them?"

"That..." Nicole stuttered. Indeed...merchants and thieves were sworn enemies. If one wanted to become a thief, then they couldn't become a merchant.

Roger asked in confusion, "Boss, although I agree with your choice of becoming merchants, wouldn't choosing mercenary be ok too? Isn't it the same?"

"No!" Suo Jia shook his head again and said strongly, "The problem with mercenaries is that you must follow merchant groups. You don't have the privilege of moving independently. That means even if your adventuring objective is nearby, we won't have the time to go investigate it!"

Roger dropped his jaw in shock at Suo Jia's explanation, and nodded furiously. He was right...if they became mercenaries, then they had to escort enough merchant groups to pass the checkpoints. They had no freedom to speak of.

After a long while of silence, Xiang Yun said in a low voice, “But Boss, according to what you said, thieves and merchants are mortal enemies. In that case, merchants also can’t become thieves!”

Suo Jia flatly replied, “If you just put away the flag and replace it with an emblem, you’ll immediately become a thief. Isn’t it a simple matter?”

“That’s...” Xiang Yun stuttered a bit before his eyes lit up. “In that case, isn’t it the same situation if we become thieves? If we just take down our thief emblem, wouldn’t we become merchants?”

Suo Jia bitterly chuckled and helplessly replied, “Friend, merchants pay particular attention to their credibility and fame. If you take down the emblem, you can hide your thief status. But let me ask you, who would do any business with a merchant group that lacks reputation or credibility?”

Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun all lowered their heads in thought. After long contemplation, they finally raised their heads to look at Suo Jia in admiration. Xiang Yun praised, “As expected, after thinking it through carefully, choosing to be merchants is the most perfect choice. Merchants can simultaneously possess the strengths of all the occupations, yet ignore their weaknesses. It’s really a perfect choice!”

Suo Jia nodded and declared, “Since everyone has agreed, I’ll just go ahead and choose merchants. You guys need to think it through carefully, once chosen, it cannot be changed again!”

The three nodded uniformly in response. Suo Jia picked up the pen and drew a check next to the merchant position. He then continued to read the rest of the form.

The following content was all along the lines of identification. After filling in the answers to some simple questions...Suo Jia finally handed it to the staff member, and received an amethyst certificate. This certificate was created from a complete amethyst crystal. There were many grooves on its surface. Every time a checkpoint was passed, they'd receive a special crystal which they'd embed into the groove. This proved that their group had already passed that specific checkpoint. Once all the grooves on the certificate were filled, it would mean that they had successfully passed through the Greater Trade Routes.

After the transaction procedure was completed, Suo Jia's group didn't directly enter the Greater Trade Routes. Instead, they prepared themselves and rested well for a few days. Once their bodies and minds had completely recovered, they would enter the Greater Trade Routes with an optimized state of mind and full energy.

During the next several days, the four of them spent every day training and relaxing their bodies and playing to their content. Everyone knew that once they entered the Greater Trade Routes, they wouldn't be able to experience moments of leisure like this.

Everyone else had gone out, but Suo Jia wasn't in the mood to go play. After all, he had discovered in Loze City that many of the things there had been brought back from the Greater Trade

Routes. Faced with so many treasures, how could Suo Jia remain indifferent to them?

However, Suo Jia had already used up all of his money in Amin City. With lack of better option, Suo Jia could only start up the furnace to create some potions and go auction them off again. That way, he could use the money from the auctions to buy these treasures from the Greater Trade Routes. What Suo Jia found a great pity was that the good items seemed to have all been bought off by others already. The remaining ones were all more common goods. Despite this, Suo Jia was still pretty happy. Things that were common on the Greater Trade Routes were already the same value as entire cities in Suo Jia's eyes.

Suo Jia stayed inside for several days in a row, focusing entirely on using Zhiyao to produce potions. Within a single week, he'd managed to sell thousands of groups of potions for astronomical prices. Suo Jia used the money to purchase the materials that he thought were very valuable.

That wasn't the end. The most exciting thing to Suo Jia was the auction's selling of some of the currency used in the Greater Trade Routes. Although the price to buy it was unreasonably high, Suo Jia felt that any amount of money was worth it. As a merchant, the most important thing was to first accumulate capital. With this money, he would at least not have to worry about the funds needed to launch the business as soon as he entered the Greater Trade Routes.

After playing outside for a week, Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun finally rushed back. When they'd all heard that Suo Jia had

managed to gather 10,000 Trade Route coins within that week, they all dropped their jaws open in shock. Xiang Yun suddenly realized that having Suo Jia as the leader was probably the most correct decision possible!

Loze City was a city located in the oasis of a desert. One needed to pass through Tagan Desert to reach their destination. Loze City was actually near the border area of Tagan Desert, less than 1000 kilometers away from the edge.

Very early in the morning, while the sun hadn't yet risen, Suo Jia's group left from the other side of Loze City under the cover of the night and continued to advance. They passed through the vast, over 10,000 kilometer area, the world's largest and harshest place: Tagan Desert. This was considered as the Greater Trade Route's first checkpoint: Desert of Death!

Chapter 296: Duo Mei's Decision (Part 2)

The desert's terror could only be compared to that of a great sea. Once one entered either, it was impossible to guarantee survival, no matter how strong one was. Storms, quicksand, bitter cold, scorching heat...the desert's terrors couldn't be described with just words.

A month after Suo Jia's group had entered the Greater Trade Routes.

In the distant Holy Light Empire within a gold and jade palace, Duo Mei stood there trembling with a letter in her hand. Tears had already blurred her vision.

The letter had been secretly sent. There were only a few words on it: Suo Jia had already entered the Greater Trade Routes!

As she looked at the letter in her hand, Duo Mei recalled the expectations that Suo Jia had had of her in the past. That's right... the reason Suo Jia had given them so much equipment with complete disregard to cost was because he'd hoped that they would travel through the Greater Trade Routes together. However, they had betrayed Suo Jia's friendship.

It was now nearly two years since Suo Jia had left. During this time, the fire wind warriors seemed to have enjoyed glory, splendor, wealth and rank. They had heavy authority within their grasp, and they were proud of their success. However, they knew that this wasn't really the life they had wanted to live. How could

phoenixes that had flown high up in the air for so long be willing to crawl into a chicken's nest to live in for their entire lives?

Money? Power? Status? Glory? Everything seemed so childish. Their hearts had lost their objectives, their souls had abandoned all direction.

Did they regret it? That's right...since the day they'd left Suo Jia, their regret had been like a malicious bug, constantly eating away their hearts. This kind of pain not only couldn't be forgotten as time passed, but instead grew even fiercer.

"Crunch..." Duo Mei crumpled the letter in her hand into a ball, and suddenly stood up. With a strong sigh, she hurriedly rushed out of the room to quickly pack up her bags.

Half an hour later, Duo Mei stood with a determined expression in the study room of the Fourth Prince, the current emperor of the Holy Light Empire. Across from her was the emperor, glaring at her with a furious expression.

The Fourth Prince took a deep breath and said, "Duo Mei, I have never been unkind in my care towards you these past years. When you wanted power, I gave you power, when you wanted money, I gave you money, when you wanted glory, I gave you glory. Yet now you're telling me you want to leave. I can't understand this at all!"

Duo Mei firmly looked at the Fourth Prince and said shakily, "Your Majesty, because of my devotion towards you, I betrayed

Suo Jia two years ago. However, you've already become the noble Emperor. I think...that I've already completed my duty, and now is the time for me to leave your side."

"Hmph!" With a cold snort, the Fourth Prince shouted angrily, "Do you still plan on trying to keep me in the dark? Don't think I don't know that your sudden departure is definitely to search for Suo Jia! Am I wrong?"

Duo Mei took a deep breath, and didn't deny it. Instead, she nodded and said, "That's right. Your Majesty is completely right. I'm leaving now in order to go search for Suo Jia in the Greater Trade Routes. No matter what, I owe a promise to him!"

"Promise?" The Fourth Prince knit his brows together in doubt.

Duo Mei resolutely nodded and replied, "Yes, we indeed had sworn loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty, but...we had also sworn to Young Master Suo Jia as well. This promise is something I plan to uphold with the rest of my life!"

"Huk!" The Fourth Prince abruptly stood up and roared, "This is betrayal! You know that Suo Jia and I are irreconcilable mortal enemies! Let me ask you, if Suo Jia returns to get his revenge, how would you treat me? Don't tell me you'd go against him?"

Duo Mei narrowed her eyes at the Fourth Prince's question and after a long while, strongly replied, "No...Your Majesty, no matter what, I will never personally harm Your Majesty. The animosity between you and Suo Jia should be resolved between you two

alone. I definitely won't intervene. However...that only applies to you. Aside from Your Majesty, I won't owe anything to anyone else!"

"You!" The Fourth Prince pointed a finger at Duo Mei and roared, "Duo Mei! You're being too brazen. This is betrayal. You've already gone back on your promises before, do you want to destroy all your oaths?"

Duo Mei smiled at him in contempt and stressed, "Your Majesty, even if I destroy my oaths, you are the reason for it. Originally... you had ordered me to follow Suo Jia and obey his commands. Because of your self-contradicting words, we no longer knew who to follow!"

Duo Mei breath became more rushed. "Your Majesty, we've already helped you gain the throne. Right now, you're the noble ruler of the empire. We've been acting on our oath of loyalty to you. However...under your instructions, we also swore loyalty to Young Master Suo Jia, so for the rest of my life, it's time for me to put my other promise into practice!"

"Such impudence!" The Fourth Prince bellowed. "I'm the emperor of Holy Light Empire. As one of my citizens, you are obligated to listen to whatever I say. You want to betray me, betray the Holy Light Empire?"

Duo Mei forced a smile and said resolutely, "Your Majesty, perhaps you don't understand. To us warriors, promises and oaths are more important than anything else. Since I've established oaths, I must carry them out. Because Your Majesty has already

made me betray Young Master once...I no longer owe the Empire anything!”

Duo Mei respectfully bowed and declared, “Duo Mei will now leave. From today onwards, I will be faithful to only Young Master Suo Jia for the rest of my life!” She slowly straightened her back, and after coldly glaring at the Emperor, confidently turned to stride out the door.

“Hmph!” Seeing this scene, a dark smile suddenly appeared on the Fourth Prince’s face. He coldly stated, “Duo Mei, I’ve known for a while that I couldn’t possibly raise you to be skilled enough. However...where did you think this was? Did you think you could just come and go as you pleased?”

“Clang!” The Fourth Prince suddenly raised his teacup and smashed it onto the ground as hard as he could. With a fierce clatter, the teacup shattered into pieces. At the same time, figures flashed outside the study, and began to jump into the room from the windows and the door.

Duo Mei abruptly froze in her tracks and surveyed her surroundings. The people that arrived entered her vision; they were nobody else but her Angelic Six-Winged Phoenix sisters that she’d known for so many years!

Chapter 297: Duo Mei's Decision (Part 3)

Duo Mei looked at her close sisters, her gaze filled with pain. At the same time, the Fourth Prince shouted, “You girls already heard her earlier, Duo Mei wants to betray me and the Holy Light Empire. In that case, she can no longer blame me for being merciless!”

Duo Mei faced her sisters and expressionlessly stretched out both her hands. With a flash of silver light, the Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Blade appeared in her hands. At the same time, she said in distress, “Sisters, I’ve already made my decision to leave. From now on, you are all your own leaders. No matter how you treat me, I won’t blame you!”

After hearing Duo Mei’s infuriating words, the Fourth Prince cried out, “What are you all standing around for? Hurry up and seize her!”

Faced with the Fourth Prince’s commands, the eldest girl amongst the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes leapt out from the group and glared at Duo Mei. “Duo Mei! You’ve really let us down! Do you know how cold your actions make our hearts feel?! Do you know how much you’ve disappointed us?!”

Duo Mei closed her eyes in grief and said, “Everyone, I’m sorry. I just cannot forget Young Master Suo Jia, cannot forget how well he treated us, or our promise with him that day. I’ve already sworn to him; as long as he restored my complexion, I’d swear devotion to him for life!”

Duo Mei suddenly opened her eyes and firmly locked gazes with her sisters. “I’ve already betrayed Young Master Suo Jia once. These past two years, I’ve already endured the torment in my heart. That’s why I’ve already decided that no matter what, I must abide by my oath. I definitely can’t make any more mistakes!”

“Hmph!” In response to Duo Mei’s words, the Fourth Prince coldly snorted, “Duo Mei, don’t try to lure them with sentimental words. The benefits and kindness Suo Jia offered are very tiny. Look at what I’ve given to you all, are these things that Suo Jia could’ve given to you?”

Duo Mei glared at the Fourth Prince and said in disdain, “That’s right, you can grant us glory, power, status, and gold. But eight years ago, you were indifferent to our pleas. Even if you had the capability, you refused to help us maintain our complexions, and even claimed it was for our sake, for the sake of us being at our strongest. However, you would never understand that complexion is equivalent to a girl’s second life!”

Duo Mei frigidly looked at the Fourth Prince and mourned, “It was Young Master Suo Jia who gave us hope, and it was he who restored our beauty. Thus...we once promised that we’d remain loyal to him for our whole lives. This is something I definitely cannot turn back on!”

Duo Mei said through clenched teeth, “Honestly, Your Majesty, the day you exiled Suo Jia, I hadn’t yet decided what to do. Everything had happened too suddenly for me. Under those circumstances, if Young Master Suo Jia had been willing to command us, I definitely would’ve listened to his, not yours!”

The Fourth Prince was almost insane with fury. He indignantly stretched out his right hand and pointed at Duo Mei with a shaking finger, “Hurry up and seize this audacious and arrogant girl!”

Following the Fourth Prince’s commands, the 35 Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes quickly pulled out their Six-Winged Phoenix Heavenly Blades and surrounded Duo Mei. Their 35 glinting war blades were all pointed at Duo Mei.

The Fourth Prince fiercely spat out, “Duo Mei, I’ll make you pay for your words and actions. Nobody can betray me. If anyone dares to even try, they’re just digging their own grave!”

Angelic Six-Winged Phoenix #2 interjected, “Duo Mei, it’s still not too late to admit your wrongs. As sisters that have known you for a long time, we can still forgive you. Please don’t hurt us like this. Alright?”

Duo Mei’s body shuddered at #2’s words. They had been sisters for so long, yet today they were facing each other with their blades. This was really too cruel to Duo Mei.

Duo Mei slowly but firmly shook her head. “No...I cannot admit my wrongs. No matter what, I am unable to remain loyal to His Majesty, the Fourth Prince. Even if I die here today, I definitely will not change my decision!”

“Tch...” #2 tsked in disdain. “What are you saying! Who said this stuff to you! We’re already at this point, how have you not yet

realized where you have erred!”

Duo Mei couldn't help but freeze. When #2 saw Duo Mei's puzzled expression, tears quickly welled up in her eyes as she choked, “You silly girl, didn't Young Master say before? You're the leaders of us Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes. We must all listen to you. Now...how could you secretly leave all alone, and forget the task that Young Master had entrusted to you?”

“You! You guys!” Duo Mei felt both astonishment and happiness at #2's words. She looked around and saw that every single one of the Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes now sported red eyes.

Seeing everyone's strange reactions, the Fourth Prince finally realized that something seemed wrong. He nervously swallowed and loudly declared, “What are you still standing around for? Hurry up and capture her! Do all of you plan on rebelling?”

In response to the Fourth Prince's words, #2 lightly balanced her blade on her shoulder and turned around to say to him, “I'm sorry, Your Majesty, this kind of caged-bird life doesn't suit us. In addition...just as Duo Mei said, we've already sworn to Young Master Suo Jia. From today until the day we die, we will only serve Young Master Suo Jia.”

“You! You all want to betray me!” The Fourth Prince repeated.

“Hehe...” #2 laughed awkwardly and pointed at Duo Mei. “I do apologize, Your Majesty. Although we don't want to betray you, what can we do about Duo Mei? She's our head. If we don't follow

her, wouldn't that be true betrayal? I'm sure you know, betraying your companions is even more despicable than betraying the king!"

The Fourth Prince immediately fell silent. Although he really wanted to redeem everything, what else could he say? In a frenzy, the Fourth Prince couldn't speak a single word.

Duo Mei suddenly cussed her fists and solemnly announced, "Your Majesty, the Fourth Prince, we've already helped you gain your throne. Next...it's about time we look for Young Master Suo Jia."

Faced with Duo Mei's farewell, the Fourth Prince finally lost himself in panic and shakingly said, "You'd all better think this through carefully. You don't want power, status, or glory? Are you really willing to let go of everything to chase after that wretched and undisciplined Suo Jia?"

Duo Mei helplessly shook her head. "Your Majesty, from the beginning, you never understood what we wanted. Money, power, status, or whatever aren't what we warriors pursue. You will never understand this."

Duo Mei turned to speak to her sisters, "Alright, Young Master Suo Jia has already entered the Greater Trade Routes, so we can't fall too behind. No matter what, we must catch up to him and use our lives to protect him!"

Duo Mei turned around to bid the Fourth Prince farewell before

her body rose up into the air and she leapt out the window. At the same time, the other Angelic Six-Winged Phoenixes turned around and also gestured at the Fourth Prince before following her into the air.

After watching the defiant 36 figures quickly soar upwards, the Fourth Prince violently fell back down into his seat, paralyzed. He knew that the only thing he could do now was pray, pray that Suo Jia would die on the Greater Trade Routes. Otherwise, if Suo Jia successfully returned, the Holy Light Empire might end up having its name changed.

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While Duo Mei was leading her sisters away from the palace and off to the Greater Trade Routes, Suo Jia's group of four had already journeyed through the Tagan Desert for over a month and were currently undergoing a life's test.

The peerless Tagan Desert was both deserted and dry. It was an extremely large sea of sand without any waves. Its deathly stillness was suffocating. At the moment...Suo Jia's group was sitting within a tent, enjoying the deliciousness of Roger's exquisite cooking skills. Yet they hadn't discovered at all that not too far away, a sandworm over a hundred meters long and several dozen meters thick was silently making its way towards their location under the sand.

The sandworm was an earthworm-like magical beast with an extremely long and thick body. It had a single, very flexible mouth that could open extremely wide to a diameter of over 20 meters.

The sandworm had many methods of attack. But typically speaking, it wouldn't ever show itself. Instead, it would hide underneath the sand and open its large mouth, swallowing both the sand and the people above. From the surface, it simply looked like the work of quicksand. But in reality, it was a sandworm feeding.

Inside the tent, Suo Jia's group was sitting around a well-made, circular table filled with fragrant dishes. They were currently gulping down the food like ravenous beasts. Xiang Yun quickly reached out his palm to grab at the last bun on the table.

"Hu!" A sound rang out as Xiang Yun's palm only managed to grasp empty air. Puzzled, he raised his hand only to see that the round table was quickly sinking down into the land. In the blink of an eye, the round table was completely buried underneath the sand, and a whirling sand vortex appeared before them!

"Yah!" Following Nicole's sharp cry, the four people who had been very close to the table all began to spiral along with the sand, heading towards the gaping hole in the center. Everyone knew that once they fell inside, they'd be doomed. No matter how strong they were, there was absolutely no way they could survive falling into that sandtrap. It could kill them from suffocation alone.

Although Suo Jia was extremely shocked by the sudden appearance of the danger, he didn't panic. He fiercely stamped down with his feet, activating the Unrivaled Wave Walking, and his entire person burst up into the air. At the same time, Suo Jia swung his right hand, and a long ice stream instantly uncoiled to

wrap itself around his three companions.

Chapter 298: Thousand Year Monster Core

(Part 1)

The ice stream wrapped around Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole. Afterwards...Suo Jia manipulated the ice stream by focusing all his strength into lashing the stream outwards like a whip, sending it and the three people with it flying high up into the air and into the distance.

The bodies of Xiang Yun, Roger, and Nicole were all flying through the air. As they looked down below, the three of them were shocked to discover that walls of flesh had abruptly risen up around Suo Jia. They could only helplessly watch as an incomparably giant sandworm burst out from the ground, and used its large mouth over 20 meters in diameter to swallow Suo Jia up from below. It then turned around and plunged back into the ground head first. After a short moment of twisting and turning, its long and thick body disappeared underneath the sand.

The three blankly descended back onto the sand, staring in a daze towards the direction the sandworm had disappeared in. The next instant...as if they'd all gone insane, the three of them disappeared as they charged in that direction at full speed. However...by the time they'd reached the spot, the sandworm had already completely buried itself underneath the sand. After a moment of moving sand, all traces of the worm had disappeared.

The three of them stood there in complete shock, unable to say a single word. They knew that Suo Jia had encountered this disaster for their sakes. If it weren't for the sake of rescuing them, Suo Jia definitely would've been able to escape by himself. Their lives had

been exchanged for Suo Jia's!

“Hu...” As the three stood frozen, a fierce whizzing sound came from nearby. They turned their heads in alarm, only to see that thick and extremely long sandworm leap out from the sand once more, flashily twisting its body as if provoking them!

When they suddenly saw Suo Jia's murderer, the eyes of Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger couldn't help but turn red. They pulled out their weapons and wildly charged at the sandworm.

“Hiyah!” Xiang Yun pushed off the ground and suddenly jumped up. As his body soared through the air, Xiang Yun's hands reached out and firmly grabbed the largest, cross-shaped war blade.

“Clang!” A violent sound reverberated through the air as the extremely thick and sharp two meter long crossblade was unsheathed. As Xiang Yun lunged forwards, the blade glinted with a bright and piercing light as it slashed at the sandworm's thick skin.

“Eh!” Xiang Yun's attack left a deep gouge in the sandworm's skin. The next instant...the large rebound traveled through Xiang Yun's war blade. After freezing for just a moment, Xiang Yun's body was sent flying backwards into the distance like a bullet.

“Tch...” Seeing this, Roger clenched his teeth. Just as Xiang Yun had done, he bounded into the air. His body somersaulted and his feet kicked outwards as if chained together, his target being the sandworm's throat region.

“Bang, bang, bang...” Roger heavily kicked the sandworm’s throat multiple times. However, his attacks had absolutely no effect. Roger’s feet weren’t able to pierce the sandworm’s meter thick and elastic skin, let alone wound it.

With lack of better option, Roger could only descend from the air to kick at the sandworm’s skin, before pushing off the sandworm and flipping through the air to continue attacking once more. No matter what, he wouldn’t give up.

However, the instant Roger’s body rose through the air once more, the long feelers next to the sandworm’s mouth suddenly curled upwards. Like a whip, it lashed Roger’s body. By the time he’d realized what had happened, his body had already been sent flying backwards 100 meters, and he fell back down to get stuck deep in a sand dune. If the soft sand hadn’t cushioned his fall, this attack alone would’ve been enough to end his life. But despite this fortune, Roger seemed to have lost his ability to continue fighting.

Xiang Yun and Roger had lost one after another. They furiously glared at the sandworm, both of them knowing that all they could do was place their hopes on Nicole, since they didn’t have the ability to harm the sandworm at all!

Just as the two of them were struggling to stand up, the concealed Nicole suddenly appeared behind the sandworm. With a bright flash of her hands, she instantly attacked with Instant Kill – Revised!

“Clunk...” Following Nicole’s full speed attack, the sandworm’s glossy and moist skin suddenly caved in. Then...its great elasticity suddenly caused it to rebound, pushing Nicole’s stiff dagger back!

Nicole grit her teeth as she waved her right hand once more. The dagger slashed down multiple times like rain on the sandworm’s skin. In a mere instant, multiple attacks bored down. Unfortunately, Nicole’s attacks didn’t seem to have any effect. The sandworm simply wriggled around and with a swing of its feelers, Nicole was also sent flying backwards, trailing dust behind Roger.

Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger couldn’t help but feel despair. Such a powerful sandworm wasn’t something humans could possibly contend with. That sturdy and extremely elastic skin couldn’t be harmed by any weapon. The three of them watched as the sandworm danced violently along the sand, as if provoking and teasing them.

Xiang Yun struggled to crawl back up. Although he knew victory was impossible, Xiang Yun wouldn’t concede. At the moment, only he still had the ability to fight. Roger and Nicole had both incurred serious damage. If they didn’t properly recover, they might even lose their ability to move altogether.

Xiang Yun dragged the heavy crossblade as he walked towards the sandworm step by step. Following his advance, a blazing energy violently surged out from the heavy crossblade in his hands and gathered together.

Seeing that he was just about to enter the attack range, Xiang Yun abruptly stopped. He stared blankly at the sandworm fiercely

twisting about. Now that he was looking more closely, it didn't seem to be provoking them, but rather, struggling in pain!

At that moment, a pale blue color quickly rose up from below the sandworm. As the blue spread outwards, the sandworm's movements gradually slowed. The next instant...a certain part of the sandworm's body was suddenly covered with a white mist. At the same time, the color of that patch of skin quickly changed from pale blue to azure.

"I've got it!" With a loud shout, Xiang Yun excitedly leapt up and wildly brandished the war blade in his hand, chopping downwards towards that azure colored skin with all his strength.

"Snap..." A clear sound followed the fierce strike as that sandworm's chunk of skin shattered, the pieces falling to the ground one after another. This revealed the space within its body.

"Wa!" Xiang Yun, Nicole, and Roger couldn't help but cry out joyously as they watched the skin fall down. They saw that Suo Jia was currently standing up inside the sandworm's body with a slight smile towards their direction, his body surrounded by the Water God's Shield.

They watched as Suo Jia quickly wriggled out of the crack that Xiang Yun had split apart. He then dragged Xiang Yun by the hand and they retreated at full speed.

Only after running far away and reuniting with Roger and Nicole did Suo Jia finally stop. He turned around to look at the sandworm

that was still painfully writhing around.

“***....” Suo Jia cursed. “That thing was too abominable. Not only did it swallow our table and food, it even dared to harm my team members. It must die!”

“That...” Roger crawled up from the ground with difficulty and bitterly smiled, “Boss, that thing is too powerful. I think...that it’s better if we just run now!”

Suo Jia firmly shook his head and huffed, “That won’t do. Nobody can safely leave after harming my teaming members like this. You guys stay here and watch, I’m going to split that thing into eight parts!”

Suo Jia suddenly raised his right hand. With a flash of blue light, a sharp Mysterious Ice Arrow whizzed out towards the sandworm, accurately striking its body.

Nicole weakly stood up and said, “Don’t bother wasting your strength, Suo Jia. That thing’s skin is extremely supple and strong, and extremely elastic as well. It’s pretty much indestructible. It’s best if we just take this chance to hurry up and flee!”

“No!” As soon as Nicole finished speaking, Xiang Yun interjected with glowing eyes, “Although we can’t harm it, Boss is different. You guys just relax and watch, Boss will definitely be able to defeat that sandworm!”

Chapter 299: Thousand Year Monster Core

(Part 2)

After hearing Xiang Yun confidently guarantee this result, Nicole and Roger stopped trying to hold Suo Jia back. They doubtfully watched Suo Jia shoot out Mysterious Ice Arrows one after another, with absolutely no clue about what Suo Jia was doing.

Each of Suo Jia's Mysterious Ice Arrows accurately shot the same exact position. They would all form a cold mist on that patch of skin after striking it, but from the outside, the sandworm didn't seem to be getting injured at all.

Despite this, Nicole and Roger had noticed that the sandworm's actions had grown slower and slower. A little while after, the sandworm began to draw back into the sand, seemingly about to flee.

Suo Jia roared angrily at this sight. His right hand stretched out once more, sending out another Mysterious Ice Arrow. That piece of skin that had been struck by over a dozen Mysterious Ice Arrows finally shattered, forming a cavity a meter in diameter. Sensing the wound on its body, the sandworm's actions became even faster. It probably also knew that if it didn't run now, it would lose its life.

With a dark smirk, Suo Jia exhaled as a blue light appeared above his palms. In that moment, Ice Roar was instantly activated. Its vicious, freezing winds shrieked through the air as it burst outwards from inside that opened cavity.

Having suffered from such a strong attack, the sandworm had no choice but to stop its advance underground, focusing entirely on resisting the Ice Roar. Suo Jia's right hand flashed blue multiple times as he constantly devastated the sandworm by activating multiple Ice Roars in succession from inside its body.

Nicole, Roger, and Xiang Yun watched as the sandworm's body gradually turned rigid. The color of its outer skin turned from earth-yellow to pale blue, to azure, to finally...the point where its entire body was glowing blue like a gemstone.

Suo Jia confidently declared, "Xiang Yun, it's time for your turn. Go...blow it up into pieces with your slashes!"

Xiang Yun happily brandished the large blade in his hands, and his body jumped into the air. With a wave of the warblade, he heavily chopped downwards on the sandworm that had stiffened in its spot.

"Clang!" With a loud sound of metal meeting metal, Xiang Yun's mighty blade struck down hard on the sandworm's body. Afterwards...Xiang Yun's body recoiled backwards, lightly falling next to Suo Jia.

"Haha..." Nicole teased, "Little Yun, it seems you weren't able to split it open. Isn't that super embarrassing?"

With a proud smile, Xiang Yun casually replied, "Nicole, it's best if you look at it properly before mocking me. Otherwise, you could very easily become the one being mocked instead!"

At this, Nicole couldn't help but turn around in confusion to look at where the rigid sandworm was. Under Nicole's gaze, a clear sound of cracking rose up into the air!

First, a small broken chunk fell from next to the sandworm's mouth. The next moment, countless blue cracks quickly spread outwards starting from that broken off chunk extending all throughout the sandworm's dozen meters long body. In the span of mere seconds, those cracks densely covered the sandworm's entire body.

“Crash...” Finally, a clear sound rang out as the giant sandworm's body fell apart and filled the sky with blue pieces, reflecting the sunlight as they drifted onto the ground like a million jewels.

After witnessing this scene, Nicole finally realized what had happened. Suo Jia had first used his Mysterious Ice Arrows to freeze that portion of skin, then opened a cavity. Suo Jia had then activated Ice Roars countless times inside the worm's body through the cavity. Once the entire sandworm had been frozen into a huge ice cube...Xiang Yun had finally acted, shattering the ice into pieces!

Suo Jia smiled in satisfaction at the sight of the millions of frozen corpse pieces on the ground. Just as he was about to turn around to heal Nicole and Roger, an emerald-green glow amongst the pieces caught Suo Jia's attention—a monster core!

Suo Jia's eyes locked onto the green glow, and his body burst

forwards. After a few weaving jumps through the air, he landed in front of that emerald glow. Cupping it in his hands, his body flipped backwards, landing next to Xiang Yun.

When Nicole saw the goose egg-sized, emerald-green crystal in Suo Jia's hands, her jaw dropped open in shock. After a long period of silence, Xiang Yun asked in confusion, "Leader, what's that thing you're holding? Is it a gem?"

Suo Jia shook his head and furrowed his brows, "No...this isn't as simple as a gem. It should actually be that sandworm's monster core! However...why is it so large? Something seems a bit off!"

After hearing Suo Jia speak, Nicole seemed to have finally regained her senses. She shook as she said, "Young Master Suo Jia...quick! Hurry up and hand that over for me to see!"

Suo Jia's eyes lit up at this. There wasn't anyone more suitable for appraisal than a treasure hunter. Nicole would definitely be able to determine what this thing was.

After shakingly receiving the goose egg-sized object, Nicole excitedly flipped it back and forth. Eventually, she joyously cried out, "Boss, this is really a rarity. This is the monster core of a thousand year sandworm! We've struck it big!"

Suo Jia nodded and bitterly smiled, "It's a pity though. If it was a water elemental monster core, it'd be much better. Getting an earth elemental monster at this point doesn't seem very useful!"

Nicole couldn't help but freeze at Suo Jia's words before tightly grasping the emerald monster core in her hold. "How could it be useless? Even if you don't use it, you can sell or exchange it for other things! No matter what element it is...a thousand year monster core is a priceless treasure!"

"Tch..." Suo Jia tsked in disdain. He knew that Nicole had already developed these kinds of money-grabbing habits after all these years. No matter what, she'd always be able to connect anything to money.

After seeing Suo Jia's expression, Nicole seemed to have regained her senses. She passed the monster core back to Suo Jia in embarrassment and said, "Hehe...sorry, I'm used to looking at everything in terms of money. But this monster core will definitely be of some use, so you should properly store it away."

Suo Jia took the sandworm core and casually tossed it in his interspatial ring. He then rushed over to the sandworm's carcass. Such tough and durable skin was definitely good to use, especially because it was from a thousand year old sandworm. Its skin was basically indestructible.

With Xiang Yun's and Roger's help, Suo Jia managed to gather dozens of square meters of sandworm skin. He'd originally wanted to collect some more, but the parts on the ground had already broken into pieces, and the skin below the sand was buried too deeply to be dug out. Thus, Suo Jia could only begrudgingly give up.

The rest of the journey went extremely smoothly. The only thing

was that they encountered hundreds of quicksand patches, and some sandstorms. Any normal people would've died a hundred times over by now, but to Suo Jia's group, this was only slightly challenging. It wasn't anything so bad that it could potentially take their lives.

Finally, after constantly being on the move for 3 painful months, Suo Jia's group had successfully passed through the Tagan Desert. After crossing over a mountain range at the edge of the desert, lush, green plains appeared before them.

Wildflowers were in full bloom across the verdant plains, and some clear pools of water were dispersed across the land like jewels, adorning the entire plains so that it was unimaginably beautiful.

They'd spent the last three months facing the yellow sand with the sky behind their backs. Having grown used to the desolate desert, suddenly seeing such a lush plain, as well as the blossoming flowers atop it, their spirits couldn't help but soar. Nicole in particular cried out joyously, and ran towards the hillside with arms open wide.

Suo Jia, Xiang Yun, and Roger couldn't help but smile at each other after seeing Nicole rush forwards so happily. However... when everyone turned to look back at Nicole, they suddenly realized that there was something wrong with the situation!

At the same time, Nicole had also finally discovered something was wrong. As she bounded to the foot of the mountain, Nicole abruptly noticed that the lush grasses suddenly moved without any

wind. When she looked closer, she realized that it wasn't anything like a grassland! The boundless field was actually formed by a ton of mouse-type magical beasts with green fur, while those flowers were actually spots on their bodies!

Nicole froze for a moment...before a sharp scream tore out through her throat. Nicole immediately turned around to charge back up the mountain with an unprecedented speed. Behind her, millions of green-furred mice wildly chased behind her, rushing up behind her.

Chapter 300: Alchemy Techniques (Part 1)

Seeing the densely packed group of green-furred mice, the three men standing at the peak of the hill couldn't help but feel goosebumps rise on their skins. Although they weren't like girls that were more innately terrified of such things, the number of creatures below them was simply too many. There was absolutely no person that could possibly remain indifferent after seeing such a sight.

"Pshew, pshew, pshew..." The three of them watched as that group of green-furred mice continued chasing behind Nicole without stopping. As they gave chase, they shot out green needles that flew towards Nicole like arrows.

After Suo Jia had run closer, he immediately raised his guard to inspect the scene closely. Although these green-furred mice weren't large in size, about the size of a housecat, the needles they shot out could actually pierce through rock! This...

A typical archer definitely wouldn't be able to shoot an arrow through rock. However, these green-furred mice could easily do so with their needles. Most importantly, these needles had a terrifying shooting range of around 50m. If Nicole's speed wasn't fast enough, she would've been shot into a porcupine ages ago.

"No!" Suo Jia shouted loudly, not daring to tarry. He quickly summoned the Diamond Dragon. At the moment, only it could disregard these green mice. If anyone else tried to go up, they wouldn't possibly be able to block the thousands of collective attacks!

Having understood Suo Jia's intent, the previously napping little creature lifted its head to yawn once. With Suo Jia's prompting, it quickly condensed its Glacial Armor layer by layer. A few seconds after, a tall and sturdy Diamond Dragon with thick Glacial Armor appeared on the mountain peak.

The Diamond Dragon's intelligence had already surpassed that of a 7-year-old child. At the moment, its IQ was near that of a 10-year-old. When it saw Nicole's state, it immediately flew into the sky without any urging from Suo Jia. When it landed, it stood directly behind Nicole, blocking those green-furred mice from their advances.

The Diamond Dragon faced the green-furred mice rushing over like a river, and opened its large mouth in disdain, completely ignoring the green needles coming towards it. It lowered its head, and a white, hazy cold air instantly flowed towards the group of mice. Wherever it passed through, green-furred mice would be shrunk into a bunch of ice cubes before they could even realize what had happened.

However, the Diamond Dragon was alone, after all. There were just too many green-furred mice. In the blink of an eye, the surface of the Diamond Dragon's huge body was completely covered in green needles. In a mere moment, the Diamond Dragon looked like it had grown a short layer of green fur.

However, the Diamond Dragon didn't pay any mind to this kind of attack. With the protection of the Glacial Armor over a meter thick, the Diamond Dragon wasn't at all afraid of long-ranged

attacks. Unless this meter-thick, beyond sturdy Glacial Armor was punctured, the Diamond Dragon wouldn't even be able to feel any type of long-ranged attack.

At the sight of the green-furred mice rushing over like a tide, Suo Jia didn't dare to tarry. With a lift of his right hand, he instantly activated an Ice Roar to work together with the Diamond Dragon and clear out the green-furred mice crawling all along the hillside.

Fortunately, Nicole hadn't alarmed that many of the mice, only those within a perimeter of 100 square meters. With the combination attacks of Suo Jia and the Diamond Dragon, the mice were soon completely wiped out.

As Suo Jia looked at the green-furred mice that now filled the ground, he let out the breath he had been holding and wiped away the sweat on his forehead as he said, "Heavens! What are these things? There are so many of them, and they can even shoot out such sharp needles. This is too frightening!"

Roger and Xiang Yun shook their heads, their complexions ashen. They understood well that if it had been them that had gone out, they definitely wouldn't have been able to hold these guys back. One couldn't just underestimate them because of their small size...each of them was the equivalent of an advanced archer. This group of green-furred mice could at the very least go against thousands of high-level archers!

When they looked down the hill, all that filled their range of vision from the bottom of their feet all the way to the boundless distance were these green-furred mice. It was a really horrifying

sight.

Suo Jia could tell from Roger's and Xiang Yun's blank expressions that asking them about this matter would be like asking a blind person; the only one that really knew what had happened was Nicole. With this, Suo Jia shifted his gaze over to her.

Nicole patted her chest, still in a panicked state as she said, "This should be the lowest level magical beast on the Greater Trade Routes...Thorn Mice! God...I've only read about these in books before. I hadn't imagined that there would actually be so many of them!"

"Thorn Mice?" The three males furrowed their brows, glancing over questioningly at Nicole.

Nicole nodded, still frightened as she gripped her chest to reply, "That's right, these should be Thorn Mice, a creature distinctive to the Greater Trade Routes. They can release paralyzing needles. Once pierced by one of these, you will enter a state of paralysis. If you've been struck by too many, your body's abilities will be completely destroyed, and you will never be able to recover from this paralyzed state!"

"Heavens!" The three guys couldn't help but gasp at Nicole's words. What was that? This was only the lowest level magical beast on the Greater Trade Routes, yet it was already this terrifying. That ridiculous amount in particular was enough to make anyone stupefied.

Nicole continued, “These Thorn Mice have amazing reproductive abilities. In around three months, they are able to give birth to a bunch of offspring; one nest normally has around 10 mice. After just two months, they can mature into adults. Their superior reproductive abilities make it impossible to eliminate them. The more you kill, the more appear. This is the first checkpoint at the Greater Trade Routes!”

Suo Jia blankly looked at the seemingly boundless plains and murmured, “Heavens, can anyone tell me exactly how many Thorn Mice are here? This is clearly impossible to pass!”

Nicole’s face was ashen as she nodded and bitterly said, “As a conservative estimate, there are over 100 million Thorn Mice gathered here. After factoring in their reproductive abilities, it’s impossible for us to finish wiping them all out, even if we continue in our next lives!”

“Mmm...” Suo Jia nodded, deep in thought as he said, “That’s right. Under current circumstances, we would need some dozen extremely powerful Magisters present to clear the way with long-ranged magics, and then use extremely fast movements to rush over before the Thorn Mice regather together. Otherwise, this is certain death!”

Everyone fell silent at Suo Jia’s words. It was very clear to see that Suo Jia reached this requirement, but just relying on him alone was definitely impossible. Even if Suo Jia could kill the Thorn Mice in front of them and successfully open a path, who would be responsible for the Thorn Mice coming to surround them

from the left, right, and back? The sky would be filled with piercing rain. It was possible that everyone would be killed in their spots as soon as they tried to leave the hill.

After a long period of silence, Xiang Yun turned around to say to Nicole, “That can’t be right. If this place was really so ruthless, how do other groups pass through? Don’t tell me...all the other groups have so many Advanced Mages?”

Nicole shook her head and solemnly replied, “Under typical circumstances, there definitely wouldn’t be so many Thorn Mice. According to the records, there should only be a few thousands of Thorn Mice gathered here at most. But judging from our current situation, it looks like some mouse plague!”

Everyone present almost fell over at Nicole’s words. Mouse plague was a type of natural disaster that would inevitably occur every several years. This didn’t just include mice, locusts, ants, etc would all similarly break out.

Typically, locusts were always present, but their numbers weren’t very high. But with a plague, the number of locusts would be extreme. When they flew, they would cover the entire sky. From a distance, they’d look like a black cloud.

When everyone looked at the densely packed Thorn Mice covering the plains, they agreed with Nicole’s guess. The mouse plague was the only possible explanation. If this was actually a typical situation, then nobody would ever be able to even dream of entering.

“Thump, thump, thump...” As everyone’s spirits fell, the deep sound of footsteps came from the bottom of the hill. All four people turned around towards the direction of the sound in shock; the Diamond Dragon had returned.

When he looked at the Diamond Dragon covered in thick Glacial Armor, Roger sighed in envy, “***, that Great Frost Wyrn is really awesome. If each of us had a Glacial Armor like that, we’d be able to charge through without restraint.”

“Glacial Armor?” An idea suddenly flashed through Suo Jia’s mind. He seemed to have thought of something, but when he pondered it more closely, the idea disappeared again. Exactly what kind of method was it?